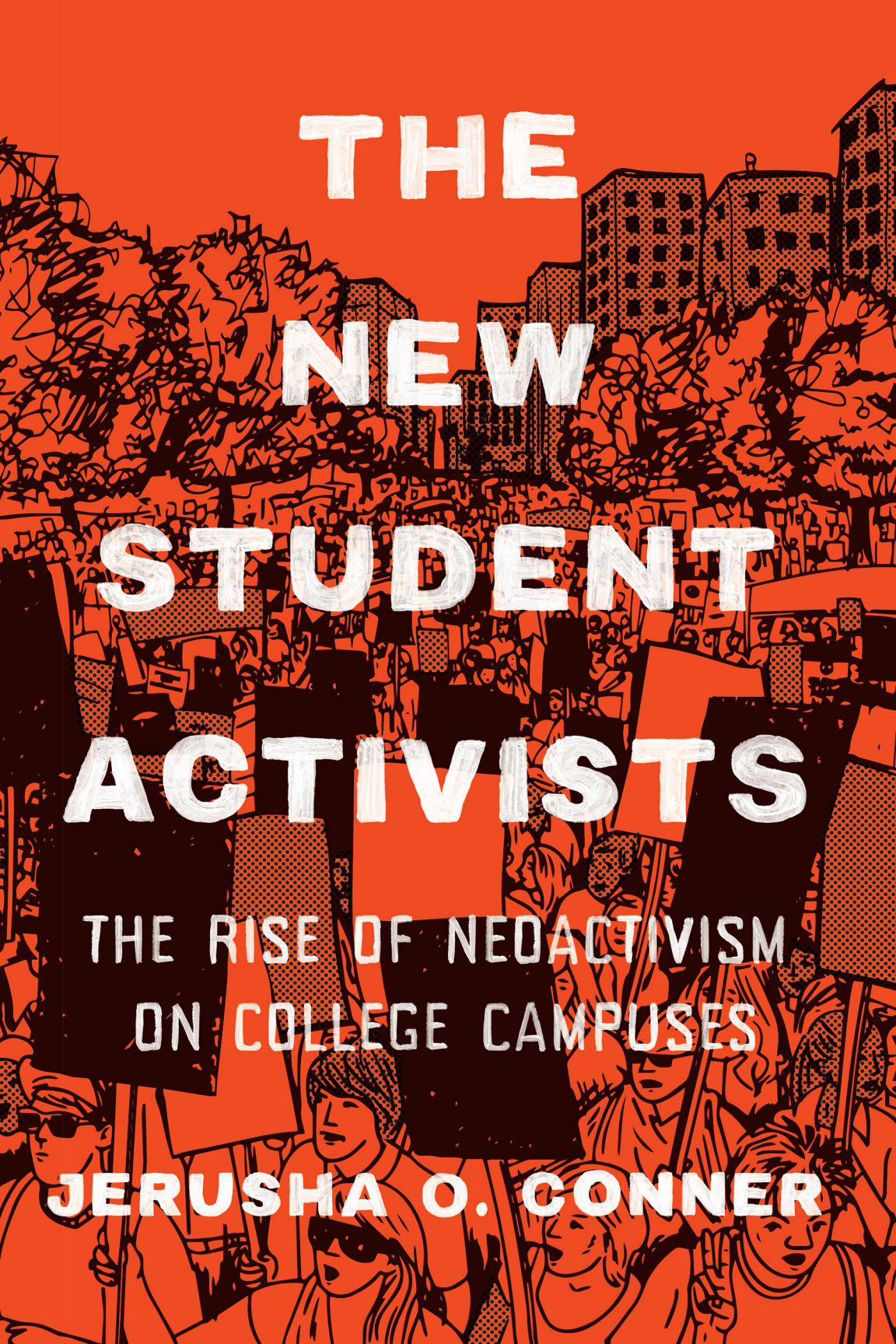
THE NEW STUDENT ACTIVISTS

THE RISE OF NEOACTIVISM ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES



JERUSHA O. CONNER

VISIT…

THE NEW STUDENT ACTIVISTS

This page intentionally left blank

The New Student Activists

The Rise of Neoactivism on College Campuses

JERUSHA O. CONNER

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS | *Baltimore*

© 2020 Johns Hopkins University Press
All rights reserved. Published 2020
Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper
9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Johns Hopkins University Press
2715 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218-4363
www.press.jhu.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Conner, Jerusha Osberg, author.
Title: The new student activists : the rise of neoactivism on college campuses / Jerusha O. Conner.
Description: Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019020339 | ISBN 9781421436678 (hardcover) | ISBN 1421436671 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781421436685 (ebook) | ISBN 142143668X (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Student movements—United States. | College students—Political activity—United States. | Universities and colleges—Political aspects—United States. | Social justice—United States.
Classification: LCC LA229 .C668 2020 | DDC 371.8/1—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019020339

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Special discounts are available for bulk purchases of this book. For more information, please contact Special Sales at specialsales@press.jhu.edu.

Johns Hopkins University Press uses environmentally friendly book materials, including recycled text paper that is composed of at least 30 percent post-consumer waste, whenever possible.

CONTENTS

Preface vii
Acknowledgments xiii

INTRODUCTION 1

1 Identifying as an Activist 32

2 Becoming an Activist: The Turn toward Activism 56

3 The Emotional and Relational Dimensions of Activism: Familial and Peer Influences 80

4 The Intellectual Dimension of Activism: Educational Influences 109

5 The Behavioral Dimension of Activism: Strategies and Successes 147

CONCLUSION 179

Notes 197
Bibliography 205
Index 217

This page intentionally left blank

PREFACE

When I was in third grade, my mother became the founding executive director of the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, California. Like all children's museums, CDM, as we called it, was a place where children were unmistakably in charge. Children could play, explore, run, lead. As the director's daughter, I felt a keen sense of agency in this space—even responsibility. I weighed in without reservation on exhibits that I thought could be improved or should be added. After all, I was an expert on what children liked and wanted.

This privileged formative experience of empowerment likely contributed to the interest I have developed over the years in youth voice and agency, first as a high school English teacher and later as an educational researcher. How learning environments encourage or thwart feelings of youth autonomy and voice has long fascinated me. But it wasn't until I began working with the Philadelphia Student Union during my first year as a newly minted professor that I came to understand youth *power* and to appreciate its distinction from youth voice—as a foil not just for adultism, but also for the various intersecting oppressive forces that impact the lives of low-income youth of color.

Founded in 1995 by a small group of high school students who were concerned about the quality of education they and their peers across the district were receiving, the Philadelphia Student Union (PSU) combines community organizing strategies with programming designed to build middle and high school students' skills as public speakers, critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and change agents. At the same time, PSU is intentional about creating a space in which its members, most of whom are low-income youth of color, can heal from experiences of trauma and discrimination. PSU works to promote youth leadership and to foster the collective capacity of youth to transform the institutions that affect

them. The organization is one of the oldest and most well-regarded examples of youth organizing.

At the time I began to work with PSU, its members were developing their Campaign for Nonviolent Schools. PSU sought to challenge the widely accepted narrative, promulgated in the mainstream media at that time, that youth of color were ready to lash out at unsuspecting adults and one another. One article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*'s Pulitzer Prize–winning series on school violence described a "pack of girls . . . bent on attack who roamed the corridors" of a school, and another article reported that teachers were "used as punching bags by wayward students" (Snyder, Graham, Sullivan, & Purcell, 2011a, 2011b). Part of PSU's counter-narrative strategy involved shifting the focus from interpersonal violence to structural violence. They framed crumbling, under-resourced schools and a system that reduced learning to test-taking skills as intrinsically violent—that is, harmful and dangerous to youth. Through creative demonstrations, powerful testimony at school board meetings, media savvy, and closed-door interactions with top district administrators, they drew attention to the violence being perpetrated on them by adult-designed and adult-run systems. They called out adult failure and positioned themselves as critically engaged stakeholders, who understood that they deserved better.

While all this was playing out, I worked with PSU to conduct a series of studies on the impact of their organizing model both on the youth involved and on education policy discourse and decision-making in the school district. My data clearly demonstrated the efficacy of their approach. I found that PSU alumni credited their experiences as youth organizers with shifting their educational pathways, professional interests, and civic engagement as they entered adulthood. I also found that policymakers in the city of Philadelphia attributed several policy outcomes to PSU's organizing, and they perceived PSU as a formidable political actor. The promise of youth organizing as a change strategy at both individual and institutional levels became all the more compelling to me.

Just as the number of youth and intergenerational organizing groups has grown markedly over the past 20 years, so too the scholarship on

youth organizing has expanded. In order to take stock of this exciting work and amass the latest knowledge in one place, my colleague and friend Sonia Rosen and I edited a book in 2016 called *Contemporary Youth Activism: Advancing Social Justice in the United States*. This book was a collection of empirical articles, focused largely on youth organizing, along with essays written by youth organizers themselves. As our book was going to print, a dramatic resurgence of student activism began to rock higher education.

Although the media was quick to seize on this phenomenon, journalists were not answering the questions that kept me up late at night at that time. I wondered who these college students were, what factors had catalyzed them to take such bold action on their campuses, and how many of them, if any, had had experiences with youth organizing programs. It was also at that time that I was approached separately by a number of students on my campus who were interested in my research and eager to join a research team.

Two undergraduate and two graduate students and I met in the fall of 2016 and began to shape the study that would provide the grist for the present book. Over the course of the year, while we collected and analyzed the data, we were joined by three additional undergraduate students. Our central research questions were simple: Who are the current college student activists? When, how, and why did they become activists? What do they do as activists? What have they achieved and what do they hope to achieve? We developed a survey to explore these questions, which we sent out to the student leaders of activist-oriented clubs and student groups, of both conservative and progressive leanings, at more than 120 campuses across the country. By relying on student clubs, we were able to recruit activists from a wide range of issue areas across different types of institutional contexts. Further, we reasoned that the leaders of clubs might know other student activists on their campuses, and so we encouraged them to share the survey invitation not only with their own groups' members but with any other students on their campus who might consider themselves to be activists. We targeted colleges and universities in every state.

We also collectively developed a follow-up interview protocol to ex-

plore the issues addressed in the survey in greater depth, and we conducted interviews with 40 self-identifying student activists who had completed the survey. Each member of our research team conducted at least one interview, following our semi-structured protocol. Our protocol included such questions as, "Can you please describe your involvement in activism?" "When did you first become involved in activism?" "What resources or supports have been helpful to you in your activism?" and "Can you describe a memorable experience you have had as an activist?" From among the 112 survey respondents who expressed interest in participating in an interview, we sampled purposefully to ensure representation across issue areas, geographic regions, and the timing of activist identity formation (either before or during college). At the time we began conducting interviews, the latter variable had emerged in our survey results as an interesting split in the data, with 52% saying they had become activists during college and 48% indicating they became activists prior to college.

During and after data collection, our research team met weekly to develop and refine coding schemas, compare analyses, and discuss emergent propositions, patterns, and outliers. We crafted an academic paper, which we presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, and we drafted three short essays for the general public based on our findings.

In this book, I reanalyze the data our research team collected, and though the analysis presented here is my own, the perspectives of my team members helped shape my approach and conclusions. Our team included three researchers of color, one researcher who identifies as queer, and two researchers who are not citizens of the United States. In addition, three of the six students identified as students activists at the beginning of this project. The diverse lenses our team brought to the data helped to widen, inform, and complicate our collective sense-making. Because I valued their insights and because they had been so integral to the development and data collection of this study, I shared a draft of this book with them, and their feedback helped me to refine arguments about the emotional dimension of activism and about the social context in which the activists in our study came of age.

Our study has limitations: we relied on snowball sampling, a recruitment strategy in which key informants are asked to identify others who might be appropriate for the sample. Targeting the leaders of activist-oriented clubs as our key informants meant that we did not reach many of the student activists whose activism is more responsive, emergent, and unconstrained by the strictures of a formally recognized club. White students were more inclined to respond to our study invitation than Black or Latinx students, and self-selection bias undoubtedly shaped our sample in other ways as well. Some would argue that our number of survey respondents is too small to draw broad conclusions. Our survey and interview data also rely on self-reports; we do not know what the student activists' parents or siblings would say about their activism, and we do not know how campus administrators, faculty, or staff would characterize the impact of the activists' efforts on their campuses. Despite these limitations, our research team felt confident in the richness and range of our data, as it represented a diverse cross-section of college student activism in different institutional settings and local contexts. In many ways, the data surprised us, and the stories the student activists shared intrigued and inspired us.

At a time when the media is quick either to disparage student activists as too smug or puerile to warrant serious attention, or to romanticize them as the champions of change we've been waiting for, the participants in this study offer a more nuanced perspective on what it means to be a student activist in the present moment. Their honest and intricate accounts of how they came to see themselves as activists, how their experiences as activists have affected them, and how they have attempted to change their institutions are not easily reducible to a single common narrative; nonetheless, their collective stories illuminate how members of the newest generation of young people poised to shape US society are heeding and heralding the call for change. To understand their calls, it is helpful to understand them: where they are coming from and why they are raising their voices at this time. This book attempts to add that context to their chorus.

This page intentionally left blank

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Karen Zaino, whose inestimable intellectual generosity improved the prose as well as the analysis. I also benefited from the thoughtful feedback of Greg Britton, Barbara Ferman, Sonia Rosen, Mark Warren, and three anonymous reviewers.

I am grateful to my colleagues and friends who have supported me through this undertaking: Christa Bialka, Alice Dailey, Rick Eckstein, Edward Fierros, Judy Giesberg, Helen Lafferty, Kristin Mangler, Jill McCorkel, Chris Schmidt, Rachel Skrlac Lo, Catherine Warrick, and Kelly Welch. How lucky I feel to work alongside each of you. I also appreciate the support of the subvention program at Villanova.

The luminous mentorship of Milbrey McLaughlin has been a blessing in my life.

I have been privileged to collaborate with incredible students on various parts of this project: Brendan Carchidi, Patrick Flynn, Megan Galioto, Madiah Gant, Makenna Kariuki, Alyssa Lombardo, Courtney Morrissette, MK Smith, and Hwa Pyung Yoo. Emily Crawford was a consummate project manager and a treasured thought partner.

Finally, I thank my family: Betty, Bill, Mary, and Charles for your steadfast encouragement and interest in my work; my mother, my north star; Austin, my rock; Coco and Curtis, my reason; and my dad, whom I miss every day.

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

In August of 2018, 20-year-old Matt Deitsch and 18-year-old Emma González appeared on the *Daily Show with Trevor Noah* to discuss the Road for Change summer tour, which they coordinated along with other March for Our Lives student activists. This tour, which took them to 80 communities across 24 states, aimed to build coalitions around commonsense gun reform and to promote voter registration. Toward the end of the interview, after observing that the youth involved in March for Our Lives are better informed about the issues and more immersed in policy than most politicians, Trevor Noah stated, "You know you guys have the right to be kids as well, right?" Deitsch responded in part, "I know you want us to be kids, but we have more important things to do" (Deitsch and González, 2018).

As they worked to build the movement to end gun violence, the youth leaders of March for Our Lives held fast to the idea, expressed by one of their members, 17-year-old Alfonso Calderon, that "every social movement in this country has had teenagers at the helm of it." Indeed, youth have played vital roles in the abolition, suffrage, antiwar, Civil Rights, LGBTQ, environmental justice, immigrant rights, and labor movements, among others (Costanza-Chock, 2012; Light, 2015). Because so much social change in the United States has depended on the deep involvement and even the leadership of young people, it is critical

to understand how and why young people become involved in these causes, what they actually do as activists, and what they achieve through their efforts. This book takes up these questions, focusing on the student activists who have emerged on four-year residential college and university campuses since 2014.

Rather than examining particular instances of campus activism or particular affinity groups of students known for their political engagement, this book analyzes the accounts of a diverse group of college students who self-identify as activists. Together with seven students from Villanova University, I designed a mixed-methods study that invited student activists to opt in to the study and tell us their stories. In this book, I analyze the data our research team collected through 237 surveys and 40 interviews with college student activists from across the United States.[1] Drawing on both the qualitative and quantitative data, I explore the turn toward activism as a developmental process that is shaped by both the immediate institutional context and the broader societal context.

Previous research on activism has highlighted college as an important site for activist identity development (Miller & Tolliver, 2017; Rhoads, 2000; Warren, 2010). Scholars have argued that college students are biographically available for activism; that is, they are largely unencumbered by financial and familial responsibilities. This argument has been disputed in recent years, as approximately one quarter of the undergraduate population in the United States works full-time while in college and a similar percentage (27.5%) has dependents (NCES, 2015). It remains the case, however, that the majority of full-time four-year college students do not yet have to contend with the responsibilities of full-time employment and child care. Furthermore, many students enter university primed for change, freed from parental oversight, and ready to make new friends. The college environment presents students with abundant opportunities to connect with others who share their values, motivation, and political persuasions. As Nick Crossley (2008) has observed, "University campuses facilitate the formation of a critical and connected mass of previously politicized actors who then use their further networks to recruit political novices into activism" (p. 18). The

collective nature of campus life means that these recruitment efforts represent powerful politicizing opportunity structures.[2]

Nonetheless, the impact of higher education on young people's sociopolitical development is uneven. Questions remain about why some students become politicized in college and others do not, and why certain time periods see colleges and universities emerging as hotbeds of activism, while in other eras, they appear to function more as enclaves, isolated from the broader social and political landscape and gripped by what Henry Giroux (2013) calls "political indifference and moral coma" (p. 150). To understand what distinguishes the current moment of student activism from prior episodes of highly visible student protest and engagement in the United States and what role the university has played in catalyzing or cultivating activist identities among students, we need to know more about the issues, approaches, motives, and beliefs driving today's college student activists. We also need to know more about how these young people negotiate their identities as activists and their relationships with their universities. Instead of evaluating the effects of a program or curriculum designed to promote youth civic and political engagement, this book works backward, starting with youth who are already actively engaged and identifying the key influences that propelled them to activism and the supports that sustain them in this work.

A New Generation of Student Activists

In his book examining the experiences of the predominantly white, affluent college students who participated in the Black-led Freedom Summer Project of voter registration and education in Mississippi in 1964, Doug McAdam argues that activism is a product of both biography and history. He explains that the young people who signed up for the summer project were shaped by an economic, social, and political context that predisposed them toward optimism and idealism. The middle-class to upper-middle-class youth subculture in 1964 was "certain, one might even say cocky, about its own capabilities and enamored of its 'history-making' presence in the world" (McAdam, 1988, p. 14). Inspired by the rhetoric of John F. Kennedy and buoyed by the accomplishments of their

forerunners who had "licked the Depression, turned the tide in World War II, and rebuilt Europe after the war" (p. 14), these privileged youth believed in their ability to effect change.

Today's youth activists may be just as sanguine about their ability to effect change, but they have come of age in a very different sociopolitical and economic context. Because they have helped galvanize the first large-scale student protests since neoliberalism took hold in the 1980s, they are responding to a set of conditions that are necessarily different from those faced by previous generations of students. While some of their struggles represent the unfinished work of earlier eras, the new student activists also combat emergent existential crises, like climate change, as well as the by-products of decades of neoliberal policy, such as skyrocketing tuition prices at public universities.

Espoused by Republicans and moderate Democrats alike, neoliberalism has been the prevailing orthodoxy in the United States for several decades. The neoliberal agenda calls for smaller governments and expanded, unfettered markets. These unregulated marketplaces are presumed to be more capable of solving social problems than governmental programs or policies, hamstrung as government is by bureaucratic bloat and corrupt politicians. Articulating the neoliberal perspective, a cover story in the *Economist* (2019) on the rise of millennial socialism argues: "Bureaucracy at any level provides opportunities for special interests to capture influence. The purest delegation of power is to individuals in a free market" (p. 12). The authors assert that to address climate change and any of the other social ills that concern the millennials, "the state should ensure markets are efficient" and "rather than obsess about redistribution, governments would do better . . . to boost competition" (p. 12).

As they work to address the challenges of their day, the new student activists have eschewed competition in favor of building diverse and inclusive coalitions, which make room for a wide range of students' social identities. This intentionality distinguishes their efforts from the more homogeneous student movements of the mid-to-late 1960s, which, like the Black Power movement that evolved from the Civil Rights movement, the Chicano student movement, or the Women's Liberation move-

ment, tended to foreground a particular social identity; or which like the Free Speech student movement or the anti-Vietnam protests tended to attract and center students "from middle and upper class affluent homes run by liberal, well-educated parents who encourage criticism and intellectual discussion and practice permissive child rearing," as one research review of "protest prone students" at the time put it (Frantz, 1968, p. 92).

In part, the diverse makeup of student movements today reflects the changing demographics of student bodies in higher education. In 1966, only 5% of the men and 4.4% of the women completing four years of college were "black or other [non-white] races" (Snyder, 1993, p. 8). Ten years later, in 1976, racial and ethnic minority students made up 16.6% of the undergraduate population, compared to 43.5% in 2015 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Female students composed only 39% of the college student body in 1965, compared to 57% in 2015. Many more low-income students have enrolled in college as well; the percent of the low-income high school graduates enrolled in higher education increased from 48% in 2000 to 67% in 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

In addition to reflecting these shifting demographics, the more inclusive nature of contemporary student movements seems to be a function of the intersectional analysis that movement actors have brought to bear as they forge links across and within movements, create room for allies, and transcend the confines of a narrow identity politics that forecloses the possibility of participation by those who do not hold the salient identity. Guided by this intersectional analysis, the new student activists are more engaged in a wider range of issues and more attentive to issues of self-care than prior generations of activists.

Both of these developments—the concomitant rise of the intersectional perspective and the practice of self-care—have been facilitated by the technological context in which activists operate today. In the past, the diffusion of ideas depended on people traveling from one community or campus to another or communicating through print mechanisms. Today, the Internet and social media have accelerated the spread of ideas and facilitated connections among people, including some who

never meet in person. Even weak ties can serve as powerful conduits for information and practices. The language and norms of self-care and intersectionality offer prime cases of such dissemination, while also illustrating the inherent tensions between activism as it is practiced today and the broader neoliberal context in which it is situated.

Self-care has become a hallmark of contemporary student activism. Today's student activists certainly expose themselves to risks through their activism, including harassment, violence, and expulsion; however, they countervail this endangerment by prioritizing the taking care of themselves and one another. Today's activists frequently discuss the importance of making time to have fun, take a deep breath, or see a therapist or counselor. They also make a point of looking out for the well-being of one another. They understand that effective activism depends on healthy participants. In their activist spaces, students have established self-care and collective care as normative practices.

The Internet and social media have supported the rising prominence of self-care. A 2015 Buzzfeed podcast on the subject was so popular that the producers reprised it a year later, and an interactive tool to assess one's well-being and encourage self-care went viral soon after its launch in 2015 (Harris, 2017). Introducing their YouTube channel, student activists Briceida and Desiré argue that self-love and self-care are critical aspects of their activist practice. They explain how learning to embrace their full selves, including their flaws, constitutes a radical act, echoing Audre Lorde's 1988 proclamation: "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare" (Muxerista Collective, n.d.). Though not all of the activists in this study described self-care as a means of ensuring their survival within an institution and a society that devalues them, many saw self-care as integral to their activism.

For those with more privileged identities, self-care can risk co-optation by neoliberal agendas, particularly when it is practiced as a form of self-indulgent consumerism or as a means of vaunting one's self above others. However, because it is often twinned with collective care in the context of the activist community, self-care not only resists but also actively works against neoliberal tendencies that isolate and individuate.

Both self-care and collective care demand an understanding of the self as more than an economic actor and call for valuing the self beyond one's productivity.

With its attention to the self, in all its beautiful complexity, self-care goes hand in hand with another distinguishing marker of contemporary student activism: the intersectional perspective. The language of intersectionality has become part of the everyday parlance in activist networks, as students have become adept at articulating not only how various dimensions of their own identities connect to the causes they address but also the linkages among the causes they care about. It may be for these reasons that few student activists today (10%) identify as single-issue activists. Fifty-two percent of those included in this study named seven or more causes in which they were presently actively engaged. Although it is true that earlier generations of student activists identified connections across struggles and sometimes demonstrated in solidarity with other social movements, most of today's student activists feel it is essential to work multiple fronts contemporaneously. For example, in an essay titled "Climate Justice Is Intersectional Feminism in Action," a senior in college, Reina Gattuso (2015), wrote about "the connections between capitalism, structural marginalization—racism, classism, nativism, gender oppression—and climate change." She argued that "climate justice is a feminist issue. . . . We know that as the effects of human emissions become more and more visible . . . the folks who are going to be hurt most are the ones already most marginalized." Rather than seeing poverty and climate change as siloed issues, she saw the interplay between them, as well as their relationship to other structural injustices, including the oppression of women. Similarly, in a piece entitled "Why I Am Fighting for Climate Justice," a Swarthmore student involved in a campaign to pressure his college to divest from fossil fuels wrote about his efforts "fighting to transform the dominant extractive political economy disproportionately burdening women, low-income people, people of color, and indigenous communities with environmental, cultural, economic, political, and spiritual exploitation" (Goloff, 2016). The intersectional perspective lends coherence to what might otherwise appear to be a scattered or fragmented set of efforts. Activists

understand how the causes they take up are inextricably linked to other causes through the man-made circuitry of power and oppression. They speak of their fate as intertwined with that of others, their own liberation as dependent on the liberation of others. Because the intersectional perspective focuses attention on the relational nature of one's existence and fosters a sense of mutual responsibility, it, like self-care, stands in opposition to neoliberalism, with its fixation on the individual as a free agent competing with others in the unregulated marketplace to get ahead.

Both self-care and intersectionality have entered the mainstream lexicon and become defining features of student activist communities today. However, they were present on the margins of earlier generations of student activist communities.[3] In some ways, the normalizing of these practices and perspectives marks the ongoing evolution of progressive social activism and reflects the intentionality with which a subset of today's generation of college student activists continues to draw from and build on the legacies of earlier generations.

Neoactivism

Although college student activists today differ in some ways from the student activists of the 1960s, the two groups share commonalities. I introduce the term *neoactivist* to describe one subset of contemporary college student activists who deliberately link their social justice work to the pioneering activist efforts of their predecessors and whose critical consciousness and intersectional perspective set them apart from their more conservative contemporary counterparts. I use *neo* intentionally to place neoactivism into conversation with neoliberalism, showing how the former speaks back to the logic of the latter. Critical scholar Pauline Lipman (2011) has defined neoliberalism as "an ensemble of economic and social policies, forms of governance, and discourses and ideologies that promote self-interest, unrestricted flows of capital, deep reductions in the cost of labor, and sharp retrenchment of the public sphere" (p. 6). This definition establishes neoliberalism as both an ideology and a set of

practices and policies. Such an understanding of neoliberalism is helpful when setting it alongside neoactivism, which is similarly a set of practices guided by a particular ideological vision.

Of course, activism is not beholden to any particular ideology. In fact, this study of self-identifying student activists included a few conservative as well as progressive respondents: some who supported women's reproductive rights and others who supported the right to life, some who supported gun control and others who were involved in National Rifle Association (NRA) advocacy. One respondent characterized his involvement as "the exact opposite of all of the sjw [social justice warrior] activism," by which he meant all the justice-oriented causes listed on the survey.

Neoactivism, however, is a term I am using to denote the work of those activists who base their actions in a critical and intersectional analysis of society, who understand their efforts as part of a rich tradition of student activism and struggles for justice, and who have largely coalesced around a shared set of values and a common vision for the future, even as they pursue diverse causes. Neoactivists believe in the rights of all people to be recognized and respected as their full selves, to have the opportunity to lead lives of dignity and worth, and to have a stake in maintaining the commons—our shared natural resources and systems, "including the environmental systems and areas on which life depends; the public spaces and settings where we gather and negotiate how we want to live together; and the culture, values, and beliefs that hold a people or a polity together" (Gallay, Lupinacci, Sarmiento, Flanagan, & Lowenstein, 2016, p. 115).

While neoliberalism seeks to divorce people from their histories and to discount legacies of injustice, neoactivists are interested in the history of student activism, and they intentionally deploy the language and tools of earlier movements. They see themselves as reviving the concerns, borrowing the tactics, and building on the work of previous generations of student activists. The organization Concerned Student 1950 from the University of Missouri stands as one such example. After successfully pressuring the president of their university to resign because of

his failure to condemn racist acts on campus, Concerned Student 1950 released a list of five demands, which included establishing shared governance, increasing the representation of faculty and students of color, and instituting a mandatory diversity curriculum. In their statement, the group wrote, "These demands are not new. They were included in the Legion of Black Collegians 1969 list of demands." This reference to the past served not only to expose just how long the institution had ignored the concerns of marginalized students but also to position Concerned Student 1950 as the group that would pick up the torch and see through the unfinished business of their forerunners.

Other student groups have similarly created programs and developed campaigns designed to build on the work of earlier student activists. For example, students in the climate justice movement, who are fighting to pressure their universities to divest from the fossil fuel industries and reinvest in renewable, alternative energies, have situated their efforts within the historical context of "treaty rights and Indigenous land struggles" (Curnow & Gross, 2016, p. 376) and have sought to build on the pioneering work of Robert Bullard, who in the late 1970s began documenting environmental racism (see, for example, Gardner, 2015). The Sunrise Movement, a youth-led effort to advocate for the Green New Deal, "spent about a year studying contemporary social movements, historical examples of powerful social movements, like the Civil Rights Movement, LGBTQ movements, anti-Vietnam war movements." One young Sunrise Movement leader reflected, "We must have been a little crazy to be thinking that we could do something like replicate our generation's Vietnam-era level of mobilization, but frankly that's what's necessary" (NBC News, 2019).

Student activists fighting against campus sexual assault and gender violence have similarly situated their work within the feminist social movement traditions. Alexandra Brodsky (2016), who was part of a group of students who filed an Office of Civil Rights complaint against Yale University for its failure to uphold Title IX, describes how she "learned about movement history and what it means to live a life of social justice" from "older, more experienced feminists . . . many of [whom]

have become remarkable mentors" (p. 256). During the Women's March on January 21, 2017, delegations of students and faculty from the Twelve Sisters Colleges wore sashes in a tribute to the suffragette movements (Schmalz, 2017). Neoactivists' efforts to learn from and link their campaigns to historical struggles serve as a reminder that student activism today is old work—work that smoldered quietly on college campuses for a period of time, only to be rekindled by the newest generation of students determined to ignite institutional and social change.

Another distinguishing feature of neoactivists is that they recognize the failures of markets—which obscure racialized histories, elide structural inequalities, and redistribute resources upward such that wealth becomes further concentrated—and governments that are more responsive to moneyed interests than they are to everyday citizens' concerns, particularly those who have been marginalized. In response, they seek to illuminate racialized histories, expose structural inequalities, and redistribute resources downward and horizontally. Where neoliberalism decontextualizes individuals, presenting "bodies as if they were autonomous from history, freed from political or social constraints, marinating in circumstances of their own making" (Fine, 2016, p. 351), neoactivists link their efforts to historical legacies and link themselves to others across issue areas, geographies, and social groups. In their activist spaces, neoactivists exercise their responsibility for the common good and work to hold institutions and governments accountable for the injustices and indignities they perpetrate. Student neoactivists use the values of equity, justice, and inclusion to orient their visions for their institutions and for society. They understand a truly participatory democracy, undergirded by organized political activism, as not just a viable alternative but also a potent antidote to neoliberalism.

Even as a response to neoliberalism, neoactivism (and its broader corollary of student activism) did not arise in a vacuum. It is important to situate them in the present sociopolitical moment and in the contemporary university. The next two sections take up this task of contextualizing activism on campus and clarifying the conditions that have led to its reemergence.

The Sociopolitical Context

The vast majority of student activists in this study entered college between 2013 and 2016. Most completed their surveys in the fall of 2016, prior to Donald Trump's election, and participated in interviews shortly after his election. Although not all the social, political, and cultural developments that marked their high school and college years can be attributed to the president of the United States, the rhetoric and actions of the president are particularly visible indicators of the sociopolitical climate for young people. Indeed, many of those in this study spoke about Presidents Barack Obama and Donald J. Trump when discussing the unique historical moment in which they were growing up and transitioning to adulthood.

In activist circles, the Obama administration has come under critique for its complicity in neoliberal projects. During the Great Recession of 2007–2009, the nation witnessed Congress and the first Black president advance legislation to bail out Wall Street banks while doing little to help average citizens who had been the victims of predatory lenders. During President Obama's time in office, hundreds of public schools closed, displacing thousands of students of color, while charter schools expanded with incentives from the Race to the Top education program. Under Obama's leadership, deportations and drone strikes reached record levels. In the final months of his presidency, indigenous people protesting the building of a pipeline on their sacred land were subjected to police dogs, pepper spray, and "military-style counterterrorism measures" coordinated by local, state, and federal law enforcement and a private security firm (Brown, Parrish, & Speri, 2017). While all of these examples offer evidence of neoliberalism's incursion into federal and state policy, the rise of Trump may well mark its triumph.

Donald Trump represents the epitome of neoliberalism. In his administration, one of the core functions of government is to unshackle and expand markets, reflecting the neoliberal ideology that free markets should be unencumbered to create wealth, reward "personal responsibility and entrepreneurial initiative," and allocate goods and services (McChesney, 1988, p. 7). In addition to attempting to undo any Obama-

era policy that represented government intervention in the markets (including the Affordable Care Act, the phaseout of private prisons, and the bans on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and national parks), Trump has overseen massive deregulation. At the World Economic Forum in January of 2018, he claimed to have "undertaken the most extensive regulatory reduction ever conceived" (Belton, 2018).

While rolling back corporate and industry regulations, the Trump administration has simultaneously rescinded protections for vulnerable populations. Attorney General Jeff Sessions canceled the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, leaving more than 700,000 Dreamers in the lurch (Shoichet, Cullinane, & Kopan, 2017); the Trump administration enforced a policy of family separation on the southern border and denied asylum seekers at ports of entry; and the Department of Education has withdrawn guidelines that sought to safeguard the rights of transgender students in schools.

At the same time that the Trump administration has eroded protections for the marginalized, the president and his family members have worked to parlay their political platform into personal profit: cutting taxes for the wealthy; garnering free press for Trump properties by using them to host summits and foreign dignitaries, such as Japanese president Shinzō Abe at Mar-a-Lago; and repeatedly mentioning Trump products and businesses, including on 35 different occasions during his first year in office (CREW, 2018). In one case, Trump advisor and spokeswoman Kellyanne Conway went on television and instructed viewers to "go buy Ivanka's stuff," referencing Ivanka Trump merchandise (Zarolli, 2017). Trump's break with precedent, when he refused to disclose his tax returns or divest from his businesses, speaks to his financial stake in the presidency. As Robert Schlesinger (2018) has written, "We have a president who sees profit as the natural and immediate spoils of office." Trump himself admitted to *Fortune* magazine in 2000, "It's very possible that I could be the first presidential candidate to run and make money on it" (Alexander & Peterson-Withorn, 2018). The congressional Judiciary Committee, chaired by Representative Jerrold Nadler, has initiated hearings to determine how Trump's personal financial interests may have shaped the administration's policies and approach to diplomacy.

Trump's ascendancy and actions have fueled a massive public response. People who had never before been politically active are showing up to protests, attending organizing meetings, and running for office. As of March 2019, the online protest tracker CountLove had identified 12,991 protests since Trump's inauguration, with over 10,702,507 attendees "demonstrating for inclusion, human rights and the environment"; the Crowd Counting Consortium estimated that in April 2017 alone, there were 950 protests, demonstrations, marches, sit-ins, and rallies across the United States, involving somewhere between 637,198 and 1,181,887 participants (Chenoweth, Perkoski, Pressman, & Thurber, 2017). A record-breaking number of women reached out to organizations such as Emily's List, She Should Run, and VoteRunLead to indicate their interest in running for political office and to register for training sessions,[4] and the numbers of women and people of color who actually ran for office in 2018 was unprecedented (Caygle, 2018). The 2018 midterm results ushered in what many have called the most diverse congressional class in history (Millstein, 2018). Public engagement in political resistance is at levels not seen for many generations.

A Rising Tide of Political Unrest: Occupy and Black Lives Matter

Though the current outpouring of outrage and public activism has certainly emerged in response to Trump and his administration, there were noteworthy precursors that may have helped build the collective capacity and will of ordinary citizens to engage in social activism and paved the way for the resurgence of student activism on college campuses. Recent US history has been punctuated by several large-scale marches, such as the 2013 March on Washington for Gun Control, following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, and the first People's Climate March in 2014. While some movements have been building for years, including efforts by the Dreamers to push for comprehensive immigration reform, others, like Kony 2012, which focused on bringing the African warlord Joseph Kony to justice, were short-lived. Regardless, their timing is significant insofar as any major public demonstration or call to action from 2011 onward would have coincided with the

new student activists' high school years. The Occupy Wall Street movement and the Black Lives Matter movement seem to have been particularly instrumental in opening up spaces on campus for the dramatic return of student activism because they each attracted sustained coverage from the mainstream media, thereby shaping the public discourse during the years in which the new college student activists were coming of age.[5]

The Occupy Wall Street movement, which began in New York City in September 2011, brought heightened attention to income inequality in the United States. With the slogan, "We are the 99 percent," Occupy activists sought to draw a contrast between the "one-percenters" who control the majority of the nation's wealth from their corporate high-rises on Wall Street and the majority of the people who are struggling to make ends meet on Main Street (van Stekelenberg, 2012). Building off the antiausterity protests in countries like Chile and Greece and responding to the bailout of Wall Street during the financial housing crisis, the Occupy activists targeted multinational corporations, investment banks, and the neoliberal governments that protected these institutions' profits at the expense of ordinary people. Although the Occupy movement has been criticized for its lack of clear demands, it helped illuminate the process of "accumulation by dispossession," a phrase David Harvey (2005) uses to explain how neoliberalism helps consolidate wealth among a small number of private interests by stripping protections, such as collective bargaining rights or protection from predatory lenders, from people who are seen as "disposable workers" (p. 170).

The Occupy movement borrowed its main tactic of establishing encampments in public squares and parks from a Serbian youth movement in the late 1990s (van Stekelenberg, 2012). Another popular tactic used by the Occupy movement, mic-checks, spread to many college campuses, where students would interrupt a guest speaker, usually a representative from a large corporation or a governmental official, to protest the "corrupt and unaccountable political and economic system" this person symbolized (Valk, 2011, p. 15). Before it faded, the Occupy movement had established a presence in 1,590 cities around the world and

at more than 120 college campuses in the United States (Giroux, 2013; van Stekelenberg, 2012). Compared to the typical social movement actors engaged in protests, those involved in Occupy were thought to be "significantly younger, more educated, more likely to be women and unemployed, and less likely to have been previously politically engaged" (Anduiza, Cristancho, & Sabucedo, 2011). In addition, researchers found that the Occupy protestors were more firmly embedded in social networks than were participants in other social movements. This finding may help explain why Occupy established a presence on so many college campuses, as campuses provide fertile ground for the formation of dense social networks, particularly those oriented toward activism. Students' critiques of the neoliberal university also certainly played a role in the emergence of Occupy on college campuses. In this way, the student activists involved in Occupy blazed a trail for the neoactivists to follow.

The Black Lives Matter hashtag first appeared on Twitter in 2013, when Patrisse Cullors began using it in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teenager who was walking home from a convenience store with a bag of Skittles and an iced tea. However, it wasn't until people took to the streets of Ferguson, Missouri, in the summer of 2014 to protest the killing of another unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown, at the hands of a white police officer that the Movement for Black Lives took center stage in public consciousness. Together with Cullors and Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi launched the Black Lives Matter platform "in order to forward a conversation about what is taking place in Black communities" (Craven, 2015). Garza (2014) has characterized Black Lives Matter as "an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks' contributions to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression." While advancing the legacy of the Black Power movement of the 1960s, Black Lives Matter engaged a new generation of young people in confronting a neoliberal police state that views black and brown bodies as disposable. According to Cornell West, the emergence of Black Lives Matter

offered a stinging "indictment of neoliberal Black power in the face of massive Black suffering . . . [caused] by unaccountable police under a Black president, Black attorney general, and Black homeland security cabinet member." West characterized the movement as "the early signs of the shattering of the neoliberal sleepwalking in Black America" (Soulvis, 2016).

As news continued to break throughout 2014 of more killings of unarmed Black men at the hands of white police officers and of juries' refusal to indict the officers, protests swept across the United States. By December of that year, "'Black Lives Matter' was the rallying call from every corner" (Taylor, 2016, p. 173), and thousands of people had participated in Black Lives Matter actions. According to one source, by November 1, 2016, "at least 1,570 Black Lives Matter demonstrations had been held worldwide," involving approximately 482,000 people (Elephrane, 2016).

Youth have been integral to this intergenerational movement from the start. Even before the movement had its name, the Dream Defenders, a group founded by three college friends, worked to organize young people in response to the 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin. The Million Hoodies March organized in his honor attracted thousands of youth (Dubois & Connors, 2012; Herrera, 2013). Frank Leon Roberts (2018) has argued that the success of the Black Lives Matter movement "would not be possible had it not been for the collective efforts of groups such as Black Youth Project 100, the Dream Defenders, Assata's Daughters," all groups of youth activists. Whether they were demonstrating alongside adults on the streets of Ferguson, New York, and Washington, DC; walking out of their high schools in Baltimore after the shooting death of Freddie Gray; or raising their voices on social media platforms, youth demanded justice and an end to the sanctioned state violence perpetrated on Black and Brown people. When President Obama summoned Ferguson organizers to the White House in 2014, he included James Hayes from the Ohio Student Union; and later in his presidency when he again hosted a meeting of Black Lives Matter activists, the White House touted the meeting as "a first-of-its-kind (event) as the President will convene leaders who represent different generations of civil rights

leaders," including several youth activists (Liptak, 2016; see also Taylor, 2016). Throughout the 2014–2015 academic year, Black Lives Matter actions occurred on thousands of middle school, high school, and college campuses, often taking the form of "die-ins."

Within one year, though, students had turned from using their campuses as settings in which to perform their resistance to viewing them as targets of their collective action. Khadijah White (2016) explains the connection between the Black Lives Matter movement and the rise in campus activism during the 2014–2015 academic year: "It was always likely that the protests against police violence and brutality occurring off campus would eventually also mobilize against the various manifestations of these different, intersecting violences in university communities" (p. 92). The University of Missouri (UM), known colloquially as Mizzou, represented the beginning of this shift. Organized by a group of 11 student activists who called themselves Concerned Student 1950, Mizzou students protested a racist campus culture and demanded the resignation of the university president, among other changes. Many of the Concerned Student 1950 members had participated in the Ferguson protests, including Jonathan Butler, who initiated a hunger strike to underscore the urgency of the group's demands (Ford, 2015). In his strike, Butler was supported by the Mizzou football team, which, with their coach's backing, refused to practice or play again until Butler ended his fast. Mizzou students boycotted, staged walkouts, and demonstrated, attracting considerable media attention, until the president of the university and the chancellor of the UM system resigned. Mizzou soon became known as "the spark that lit the wildfire" of student activism that swept across the country in the 2015–2016 school year (Andrews & Pauly, 2015; Curwen, Song, & Gordon, 2015).

A Surge of Campus Activism: 2015–2018

On hundreds of campuses across the country, the 2015–2016 academic year saw student activism once again claim the national spotlight. Student activists staged dramatic acts of resistance to campus policies, protested guest speakers, and forced administrators to engage in

long-overdue conversations about institutionalized racism and sexism. They demanded that school leaders issue statements, change policies, revise curricula, and redirect resources. In many cases, they were successful in effecting change. At Bryn Mawr College and Georgetown University, building names that honored slaveholders or proponents of slavery were changed. The term *master*, used to denote residential administrators, was dropped at Harvard University, Yale University, and Princeton University. Brown University pledged $100 million toward an effort to diversify faculty. At Towson University, student activists pressured administrators to sign a statement committing the university to work to increase the number of tenure-track Black faculty and to better retain them, among other goals. On the opposite coast, student activists at Reed College succeeded in prompting professors to accelerate the process of reviewing and revising the required humanities course, which the students argued was too Eurocentric and Christocentric, and to include student representatives from Black Reedies Matter in the process. And in the University of California system, student activists succeeded in prompting divestments from private prisons. This is just a tiny sampling of the many campaigns, some of which resulted in wins and some of which remain ongoing, on various college and university campuses across the country in 2015–2016.[6]

Data from the 2015 American Freshman National Norms survey corroborated the "revival of student activism" in higher education (Eagan et al., 2016, p. 7). First-time, full-time freshmen entering in the fall of 2015 reported "substantially greater likelihoods of participating in student protests and demonstrations while in college compared to their peers who entered" the year before (p. 6). The authors describe the freshmen as "the most ambitious . . . compared to their counterparts who participated in any of the previous 49 administrations of the CIRP freshman survey" in terms of their expectations for participating in protests, connecting to their communities, and influencing the political structure (p. 6). The 2015–2016 academic year has come to be seen as a watershed moment for student activism in the United States.

When college students returned to campus in the fall of 2016, the US presidential campaign had reached a fever pitch, dominating mainstream

media and claiming much of the public's political energy. Throughout the spring and summer of 2016, young people had been particularly energized by the campaign of Bernie Sanders; however, once Hillary Clinton clinched the Democratic Party's nomination, their involvement did not slow as much as media outlets may have suggested. According to a 2017 report by Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE), young people proved to be "an influential, diverse, large, and active group when it [came] to electoral engagement" in 2016 (p. 1). Young adults aged 18–34 turned out to vote at a similar rate in 2016 as in 2012 (50%), and in some cases, their votes kept state races competitive (CIRCLE, 2016, p. 1).

Furthermore, their engagement extended beyond voting. In a survey that was conducted following the election but prior to the inauguration, a majority of young people who voted indicated that they had or expected to become "engaged in various types of civic activities, including: volunteering, participating in demonstrations and marches, attending public meetings about community issues, attending campaign rallies, donating to campaigns or issue-based organizations, boycotting products, fundraising for community organizations and volunteer[ing] for campaigns" (CIRCLE, 2017, pp. 6–7). As they anticipated becoming even more engaged in public life beyond the walls of their colleges and universities, many students also joined or continued working on the activist campaigns that had been initiated on their campuses the prior year. Though their activism did not generate the same number of headlines during the 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 school years as it had prior to the election, their efforts, as this book will show, did not ebb, and they have engaged their institutions both as targets and as sites of resistance during the Trump era.

Neoactivism in the Neoliberal University

This book is based on the premise that becoming an activist is a developmental process that is shaped by both the immediate institutional context and the broader societal context. I argue that to understand the turn toward activism, one must view the student activist and the higher

education institution as existing in a dialectical relationship, wherein each challenges and changes the other. I illustrate this argument by presenting data showing that even though large numbers of students come to college as self-identified activists, they are challenged and changed through their coursework and interactions with faculty, staff, and peers. In these spaces, they develop an even stronger activist orientation, commitment, and identity, as well as a sharper critical eye, which they frequently then train on the social institution most proximate to them, their university or college.

As the target of their critique and concomitant demands, the institution is faced with a choice to address the students' concerns, to justify its intention to maintain what the students see as an unjust status quo, or to ignore the activists completely. Institutions tend to go to great lengths to avoid dramatic change. Change is expensive, often involving political and financial costs.[7] Furthermore, institutions of higher education are not in the habit of capitulating to student demands for deep structural change. There *are* cases of students who change their universities, but by and large, students tend to pass through their colleges and universities without leaving much of an imprint.

Rather, the neoliberal university caters to *prospective* students, competing with other universities to construct more attractive dormitories and recreational spaces to draw higher application numbers, which in turn help boost their rankings and generate even more student demand for the exclusive services they promise. The neoliberal university conceives of prospective students as consumers and current students as commodities that are manufactured for the workplace by the university, marketed in promotional materials to entice even more high-paying potential consumers, and eventually parlayed into revenue streams as donors. Although institutions do have an interest in cultivating student loyalty, as capital campaigns often depend on alumni giving, the neoliberal university typically responds to dissatisfied consumers by using superficial measures to placate them or by encouraging them to transfer elsewhere.

Neoactivist students, however, reject these solutions. Even though they understand and sometimes strategically leverage the neoliberal univer-

sity's conceptualization of them as purchasers, products, or future sources of funding, they refuse to embrace such narrow roles for themselves. Instead, they assert themselves as critical stakeholders in an institution that stands to serve a vital function in a pluralistic democracy. The neoactivist students renounce the neoliberal university's anemic understanding of its role as a workforce supplier, and instead they insist on its social responsibility to promote informed and engaged civic actors. They call out the neoliberal university's enmeshment in histories of colonialism and racism, and they call on it to understand the education it provides as a public good—a conceptualization that demands deep institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

By offering up and acting on these alternative visions or social imaginaries, the student activist challenges the university to uphold its civic mission. Accordingly, when the leaders of a college, university, or higher education system do engage with student activists in critical conversations about policy and practice, the institution realizes its civic duty. And as would be true for any other institution, the institution typically becomes stronger through this dialogic process, which forces it to not only clarify but also align its purported values with its actual policies and practices. Ironically, as the student activist and university perform the contentious, often bruising, cycle of challenging one another to evolve, they often end up strengthening each other.

Certainly, this complex student-university dialectic has existed since the birth of the university, as power struggles between students and administrators have long been a defining feature of the higher education landscape (Boren, 2001). However, the current sociopolitical context in which this dialectic is now operating means that at the present moment, the university offers a particularly potent breeding ground for political engagement and social change.

On the one hand, as student neoactivists point out, the neoliberal university requires change. As a symbol of a market-based ideology that values competitively won personal gain above the collective good, the contemporary neoliberal university perpetuates a worldview and a set of practices that are at odds with the democratic potential and the civic purpose of higher education (Giroux, 2014). As reductions in state fund-

ing for higher education have pushed public universities to resort to alternative funding models, universities have dramatically increased tuition costs and made efforts to recruit more out-of-state students, who pay higher tuition rates than in-state residents, thereby either unduly burdening or simply displacing in-state students. In addition, universities have increasingly turned to private money to finance everything from new buildings to endowed chairs to research projects. Joshua Hunt (2018) traces the neoliberal university's dependence on individual benefactors, such as Phil Knight at the University of Oregon, and corporate sponsors, such as Conagra, Pepsi, and Nestlé at Purdue University, to public divestment in higher education. Hunt demonstrates how the corporatization of higher education hurts students and society, as sexual assault complaints are covered up to protect the university's brand, student activists are suppressed (particularly when those activists are critiquing the business practices that generated the profits that are channeled into their universities), research projects are designed to serve corporate rather than public interests, and the quality of education itself is compromised, with increasing class sizes and a greater reliance on adjunct professors. All of these developments, which contravene the notion of education as a public good, have inspired challenges from student and faculty activists across the United States in recent years.

On the other hand, the contemporary university requires defense, as it is subject to mounting assaults under the Trump administration. Trump's 2018 budget proposed cutting $9.2 billion from education, including over $1 billion in student loans and other programs that make higher education accessible, and an additional $6 billion in funding cuts to medical and scientific research (Fountain & Schwartz, 2017); his 2019 budget proposal similarly aspired to cut $6.7 billion from education funding. The 2019 budget that was approved by Congress cut Pell Grant reserves by $500 million (Ujifusa, 2018). At the Conservative Political Action Conference in February 2017, the US secretary of education framed professors as the enemy, and in a separate session, workshop leaders exhorted students to record "ranting professors or out-of control student protests" and put them on social media as a way to change their campuses (Hesse, 2017). Since Trump's election, the Amer-

ican Association of University Professors (AAUP) has reported a sharp rise in efforts to harass and intimidate professors, particularly those whose scholarship involves climate change or fetal tissue research (AAUP, 2018a). Seventeen states have introduced or approved "free speech" bills based on model legislation produced by the conservative Goldwater Institute (Quintana & Thomason, 2017). These bills, which typically impose sanctions on students who infringe on the free speech of others, including guest speakers, are opposed by the AAUP for attempting to subvert institutional autonomy in decision making (AAUP, 2018b). Furthermore, the AAUP (2018b) worries that the preference in these bills for punitive measures, such as suspension and expulsion, to be used against protestors who disrupt the free speech of others may actually have a chilling effect, further restricting free speech on campus.

Even as it has come under increasing attack, though, the university has emerged as one of the strongest fronts in the new political resistance. Hundreds of universities and colleges organized buses to the Women's March the day after Trump's inauguration and for the March for Science on April 2017, and some even covered students' expenses to attend these demonstrations (Blumenstyk, 2017; Schmalz, 2017). Spurred on by student activists, scores of higher education leaders were quick to condemn Trump's travel bans, and several declared their institutions as sanctuary campuses or implemented policies and procedures to protect students from immigration detention raids.[8]

As they negotiate their contentious reciprocal relationship with their universities in the era of Trump, student activists must balance the competing imperatives to challenge but also to defend their universities. The student activist–university dialectic then takes on an added layer of complexity in the current political climate. Nonetheless, the potential remains that this dialectic will culminate not only with the university and student supporting and strengthening one another, either as institutions or individuals, but also with their empowering and emboldening one another as powerful political actors in the broader societal sphere. The transformative capacity of the university to impact individuals as well as society hinges on the institution's engagement with student neoactiv-

ists who insist that it must do more than simply sustain the structures of neoliberalism.

In advancing these arguments, I draw on and speak to several bodies of literature. I integrate educational research and theory about the civic mission of higher education in the neoliberal era with work in critical youth studies about youth sociopolitical development.

In the field of higher education, scholars have long disputed the central purpose of colleges and universities, variously conceiving of them as sites of social mobility, social reproduction, and settler colonialism. Many of those scholars concerned with the civic mission of higher education have argued that although many universities in the United States were established to prepare citizens to thoughtfully participate in a democracy and to create new knowledge that would be useful to societal improvement, universities have drifted away from these imperatives as they have succumbed to neoliberal pressure to prepare workers for the global economy of the 21st century (Ehrlich, 2000; Giroux, 2010; Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005).[9] Because it values consumer choice and individual gain over the collective good, neoliberalism undermines the civic mission of higher education by preparing students to prosper as individuals, not to work together to solve social problems and protect shared public resources. Neoliberalism prompts universities to emphasize opportunities for students to acquire the types of knowledge, skills, and experiences valued by employers over opportunities to develop as informed, engaged citizens. Indeed, most leadership development initiatives on college campuses promote moderate rather than radical leadership and fail to conceptualize activism, particularly by students of color, as a form of leadership. Community engagement in the neoliberal university often happens through service-learning programs, which can work to reify power imbalances between the university, with its noblesse oblige, and the needy (poor and typically minoritized) community, rather than spark deep structural transformation.

Despite the neoliberal university's emphasis on career preparation, students continue to develop social and political sensibilities while in college. To understand the process by which they develop these beliefs

and attitudes, I use a framework introduced by Rod Watts and Constance Flanagan (2007), which posits that sociopolitical development is a process in which civic action (what they call "societal involvement") shapes and is shaped by an individual's "worldview and social analysis." Furthermore, they argue that the relationship between involvement and worldview is moderated by two factors: a person's "sense of agency," which is defined as "empowerment and efficacy (self, collective and political)" (p. 785), and "opportunity structures" or access to "meaningful and desirable opportunities for action" (p. 786).[10] I situate this framework within the current institutional context of higher education and current societal contexts in which the neoliberal logic predominates. I show how these nested environments of school and society affect opportunity structures, feelings of agency, and worldview and social analysis for student activists with various intersecting identities and levels of privilege. My core argument is that neoactivists are developing within and challenging a neoliberal higher education context.

The Structure of This Book

This book is organized around each of the central research questions. Chapter 1 considers who the current college and university student activists are. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 examine when, how, and why students come to adopt identities as activists and the factors that have propelled them to action. Chapter 5 explores their work as activists and the impact they have had on their campuses and beyond.

Chapter 1 presents a mural, rather than a portrait of the new student activists. I examine how self-identifying activists define activism and negotiate their identities as student activists. I consider how various aspects of participants' identities, such as their race, class, and sexuality, inform their sense of themselves as activists, and I illuminate the variety as well as some points of commonality in this group of young movement actors. In this chapter, the data underscore the inadequacy of identity politics, which views experiences of oppression associated with a single identity marker, such as race, gender, or immigration status, as a source of political radicalization. Instead, I explain that the neoactivists'

intersectional understanding of themselves as bound up in one another's liberation, their values, and their diverse experiences of privilege and oppression transcend narrow identity categories and unite them in a common struggle for personal, institutional, and societal transformation.

Chapter 2 considers how the new student activists come to adopt their identities as activists. Rather than experiencing a key trigger or a pivotal moment that catalyzed their involvement in activism, most of the new student activists report a gradual turn toward activism. I offer four detailed portraits to illustrate this phenomenon. I conclude by discussing how the finding of the turn toward activism and its implications for activist identity development complicate and extend existing theorizing around youth sociopolitical development.

In chapters 3 and 4, I further unpack the turn toward activism by examining how and to what extent contextual factors specific to the higher education environment shape students' developmental trajectories as activists. Chapter 3 focuses on familial and peer influences in the formation of one's worldview and sense of agency, exploring the affective or emotional dimension of activism. Chapter 4 considers the influence of educational institutions and their various opportunity structures on students' development as activists and addresses the cognitive or intellectual dimension of activism. A key finding that emerges in chapter 3 is that for most of the activists in our study, peers play an instrumental role in sustaining, if not initiating, the turn toward activism, while family members play a less pronounced role. One of the main contributions of chapter 4 is that though nearly half of our sample reported becoming an activist in high school, the opportunity structures encountered in college, particularly activist-oriented student groups and courses, provided an important intellectual foundation and justification for what they do. These chapters examine the student activist–university dialectic by showing how the university changes the student, through the primary mechanisms of peers and professors.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus to how student activists have challenged and changed their universities. It takes up the question of how student activists describe the impact of their work. I analyze their accounts of the setbacks they have faced, the strategies they have used, and the in-

tentions and hopes that have guided them as they have worked to effect institutional or societal change. In this chapter, I focus on the behavioral dimension of activism, what Watts and Flanagan (2007, p. 785) call "societal involvement behavior," and I explore how institutional contexts shape the campaigns they pursue and the strategies they choose to use.

In the conclusion, I synthesize the findings of the book in relation to extant literature on developmental theory and return to the central argument about the contentious reciprocal relationship between the student activist and the contemporary neoliberal university. This conclusion shows how the activists profiled in this book defy common conceptions of the contemporary student activist. It also raises implications for higher-education faculty and staff about how they might strengthen and sustain the recent surge in student activism, as it pushes back against the currents of neoliberalism in the academy and beyond.

The Story of Yeej and His University

There are more than 200 student activists whose stories fill the pages to come, but in closing, I introduce one student activist whose experiences illustrate the idea that the student neoactivist and the neoliberal university exist in a dialectical relationship through which each challenges and changes the other. Yeej came to college already seeing himself as an activist. He recalled that he was around 15 years old when he first "started to really feel a burning desire to change the system that I was a part of." After an expulsion caused him to switch from a high school that served low-income youth of color to another with a predominantly white student body, he became acutely aware of the racialized differences between schools and communities. He began to understand oppression, and he saw that "all the shit I had grown up dealing with," from poverty to gang violence, was "not my fault." He explained, "It was just the way the community was built by richer, whiter, and more powerful people who had a say in how certain communities should be treated." As a high school student, he wrote a lot about his identity as a poor, gay, Hmong man. He engaged in activism, through protests and demonstra-

tions, letter writing campaigns, lobbying efforts, and creative cultural organizing, but he struggled to effect change: "In my high school, I noticed that the change I wanted to see could not happen because there was just no support for it. There were low numbers of conscious students willing to put in the work to help our communities. No matter how much I tried . . . there was not much change that came from my efforts because there was no infrastructure to instill lasting institutional change."

In college, Yeej found the support he craved, and he found meaningful opportunities to work toward equity-oriented social and institutional change. He met like-minded peers who became close friends. He took courses that allowed him to "go into the communities and make social change." He discovered adult mentors and secured an internship at a center on campus, which worked directly with "underprivileged, underrepresented, and historically oppressed communities." Even though he arrived at college with a high level of critical consciousness, he explained that this internship "has helped raise my social, racial, and cultural consciousness so much. My mentors in this department have helped me become a better person, thinker, and activist. . . . [They] connect me to the resources I need to make the change I want to see."

He appreciated that many of his mentors had once been student activists who had made changes to the institution that now benefit him. He explained, "They were the creators of the building that the department is housed in. They were the grant writers of various community programs. They were the creators of so many things on the campus that I use to this day." He saw his work as an organizer as an extension of their earlier campaigns, and he was proud to help continue his school's rich tradition of student activism.

One of the ways Yeej sought to shore up his mentors' legacy was to protect services on campus that supported the academic success of first-generation college students and other students with a history of low graduation rates. Due to system-wide budget constraints, the university was threatening to eliminate various programs that served low-income students of color and LGBTQIA students, including wellness workshops, tutoring and academic advising, free printing, late-night study hall hours,

a food pantry, and commuter shuttles. Yeej and his peers organized to write a social justice referendum that would raise student fees by $25 a quarter to ensure that these programs and services remained intact and impervious to future administrative cutbacks.

They framed the referendum as a social justice initiative because "social justice is 'justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.' The principles of social justice are what distinguish—and ultimately make crucial—this referendum and the resources that it seeks to support." As they promoted the referendum in advance of a vote by the student body, Yeej and his peers argued that by opting to tax themselves, the students would "improve the lives of *all* students." Their website asserted, "When [students] themselves are in the position to best support their peers (through [specific programs]), [our university] truly becomes the place where ALL [students] can graduate successfully."[11] Through both their appeal to a sense of shared responsibility and their approach of using democratic channels to effect change, Yeej and his peers forwarded a vision for their university that was decidedly antineoliberal. It was a vision that privileged the common good, relied on participatory democracy, and directly challenged neoliberal attempts by the university to erode protections for the vulnerable. The referendum passed.

Yeej continued to work on other social justice campaigns during his undergraduate years. Not all resulted in such a tangible change as the referendum; however, he knew that without his and his peers' efforts, the campus would be a different place for historically underrepresented students today. He had helped change his school and had left a legacy that he felt was analogous to the legacy his mentors had left for him when they helped establish ethnic studies departments and centers to support nontraditional students on campus. At the same time, his school had changed him. He reflected, "I knew that [my university] would help mold me into the activist I am today and it did!" The relationship Yeej had with his university was mutually transformative.

The story of Yeej and his university is both unique and emblematic of a broader trend occurring across many campuses in the United States where the civic mission of higher education is being reclaimed and rein-

vented by a new generation of college student activists—the neoactivists—who resist narrow neoliberal formulations for themselves, their institutions, and society, and who offer a hopeful, loving, and bold new vision for a pluralistic society. How they developed these visions and the courage to act on them is the focus of this book.

[ONE]

Identifying as an Activist

One of the more controversial episodes of student activism during the 2015–2016 school year played out at Yale University during the fall term. Shortly before Halloween, the university's Intercultural Affairs Council sent an email to the student body, encouraging them to take time to think carefully about their Halloween costumes and to seek to "avoid those circumstances that threaten our sense of community or disrespects, alienates or ridicules [*sic*] segments of our population based on race, nationality, religious belief or gender expression" (Yale University, 2015). An administrator in one of Yale's residential colleges took issue with this email and sent a missive to the students in her college, in which she questioned an "institutional (which is to say: bureaucratic and administrative) exercise of implied control over college students" and wondered if there were "room anymore for a child or young person to be a little bit obnoxious . . . a little bit inappropriate or provocative or, yes, offensive" (Christakis, 2015).

Her email sparked outrage, as students of color read the administrator's statement as an attempt to shield privileged students from having to think about the "brutal pasts that are a part of the costumes they seek to wear," the stereotypes they trade in, and the harm that such choices cause. An open letter written by a student and signed by more than 1,000 members of the Yale community framed the administrator's email as just one

more signal, along with "the Eurocentric courses, . . . the lack of diversity in the faculty, [and] the names of slave owners and traders that adorn most of the buildings on campus," that students of color do not belong at Yale. Antiracism protests spread from Yale to other campuses, where students marched in solidarity with their Yale peers, and eventually the dean of the college and the president of the university issued statements acknowledging the profound pain of Yale students of color and affirming Yale's commitment to becoming more inclusive.

Some may wonder how a couple of emails about Halloween costumes could ignite such a firestorm. Of course, it is important to set these emails in a broader context. During the fall of 2015, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and the Mizzou students' protest, students at many universities and colleges began raising serious questions about whose voices, experiences, and existences are privileged on campus—through the curriculum, through programming, through faculty and student representation, through iconography and official messaging—and whose are not. In this context, Halloween costumes became a flashpoint because of their direct relevance to issues of identity.

Identity is heavily implicated in activism. In fact, it was a student member of our research team who prompted us to add a question about identity to our survey when he shared, "I feel as though a major factor that often leads to activism is identity, or rather individuals' experiences from a particular part of their identity." For those young people who hold the identity of activist, (as all in this study do), it is important to understand how their activist identity is informed by and intersects with other identities they might have. This chapter examines that question as it explores who the new student activists are. However, I begin with more basic questions: What does it mean to identify as a student activist? How do student activists define activism, and how do they feel about being called an activist?

To answer these questions, I draw on survey data collected from a diverse sample of 237 participants from four-year residential colleges and universities, and follow-up interviews with 40 of these respondents. These student activists hail from 47 states plus the District of Columbia. At the time they participated in the study, 20% of the respondents

were seniors (class of 2017), 28% were juniors, 26% were sophomores, 15% were freshman, and 10% were recent graduates (classes of 2014–2016). A little more than one half of the sample (56%) attended public universities or colleges. Roughly one third (35%) of the participants attended a college located in a suburban setting, 32% identified their campus as urban, and the remaining third indicated that their campus was situated in a rural environment.

The socioeconomic distribution was similarly divided, with slightly less than one third (30%) of the participants describing themselves as coming from low-income families, and a little more than one third from middle-class (35%) or upper-middle-class and upper-class families (35%). The study attracted more women than men, with women constituting 67% of the sample; a number of respondents (12%) asserted that they do not subscribe to gender binaries. The majority of survey respondents identified as white or Caucasian (66%), though this percentage fell to 56% for the interview respondents. Among the survey sample, 6% identified as Latinx or Hispanic, 8% as Black or African American, 9% as multiracial or other race and ethnicity, and 10% as Asian. Fifty-four percent identified with an LGBTQIA identity. Just under one quarter (24%) of the respondents identified as white, cisgender, heterosexual individuals from middle-class or more affluent backgrounds.

With regard to their activism, two striking commonalities united the respondent group. By and large, their activism addressed a range of interconnected issues, rather than a single issue, and their activist repertoires tended to encompass a wide variety of strategies, rather than consisting of a single tactical tool. Only 10% of respondents described themselves as single-issue-area activists. In fact, more than half of the respondents (52%) indicated seven or more issues that their activism concerned, with racial justice (72%), gender equality (69%), and LGBTQIA rights (66%) the most prevalent. Their modes of activism varied, too, with 62% indicating that they had participated in three or more forms of activism over the past year. Most respondents (82%) had engaged in a protest, march, or direct action; online campaigns and letter writing or petitioning tied for second most common strategies, each employed by 61% of the sample. Only 13% of self-identifying

student activists had used a single strategy in their activism over the 2016–2017 school year. (Their causes, campaigns, and strategies are discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.)

Understanding Activism

How Student Activists Define Activism

Early in the survey, the respondents were asked how they define activism. Their definitions ranged from reflective paragraphs to pithy phrases such as "speaking up" and "promoting social change." While some definitions were quite simple, others suggested a more complex or nuanced understanding. Some definitions included a values statement or a normative claim, whereas others were more neutral. Some respondents linked their definition to their identities, while other respondents spoke in generalist terms.

Despite the range of approaches respondents took to answering the question of how they define activism, five themes emerged across their answers. These themes speak to a generally shared understanding of activism. This is not to say that every theme was touched on by every respondent; however, looking across the data set, it is clear that self-identifying student activists generally understand activism broadly as action intended to bring about change in unjust or oppressive conditions. The most prominent three themes in the data inform this definition: taking action, effecting change, and targeting injustice or oppression.

First, there was widespread understanding that activism requires action. A few respondents used the phrase "actually doing something" to highlight the importance of taking action. As one wrote, "Activism is actually doing something to further a position you hold on an issue with the goal to initiate change and make a real difference in an outcome." Another defined activism as "seeing injustice and doing something about it instead of just being complacent." Some deployed the adverb *actively* to characterize the activist's engagement. One even defined *activism* as "a verb." Apart from *acting*, *taking action*, *working*, and *doing*, other verbs activists commonly used in their definitions included *challenging*, *fighting*, *standing up for*, *organizing*, *speaking out*,

and *resisting*. Clearly, "slacktivism" was not an option for the activists in this study. Their understanding of activism called on them to respond physically with their bodies.

Very few respondents' definitions included specific types of actions, such as protesting, marching, or letter writing and calling representatives; however, some respondents made a point of noting that activism can take a variety of forms. One respondent defined activism as "working in any shape, form, or fashion to make your community better than what it is." Another said, "I define activism as anything that aims at creating a difference in society, either in small ways or in large ways. Ultimately activism is contributing to progress against overarching issues, but I see activism as anything from small steps (creating dialogue, encouraging discussion) to larger steps (huge protests, legislation, etc.)." A third respondent, who defined activism "as taking action in face of a particular topic, problem(s), and/or personal or community experience in the hope of creating (or supporting existing) change," argued that "activism can manifest in both traditional or nontraditional contexts." He went on to explain that "traditional contexts may involve protests, rallies, sit-ins, letter writing, consulting with decision makers, etc. Nontraditional contexts may involve implementing certain activist-inspired goals into an academic, professional, and social careers." This broader conception of activism reflects the range of strategies the respondents in this study report using.

What mattered more to the activists than the means were the ends of activism. They were not so much concerned with the form one's activism took as they were with the ultimate goal it sought. By far the most common element of activists' definitions was the idea of creating change. Synonyms for *change*, such as *improve*, *better*, or *make a difference*, were also used frequently. The word *change* or one of these synonyms appeared in more than 60% of the survey respondents' definitions. Activists understood their actions as purposeful and deliberate, designed to have an effect. In other words, activism is not about maintaining the status quo. It is about attempting to alter the existing state of affairs in some intentional way.

Sometimes the respondents wrote about the change activists seek in

general terms (e.g., activism is "trying to change society to improve social conditions"), but in nearly half the cases, their definitions focused on redressing social injustice, oppression, or imbalanced power relations. A critical perspective, evidenced through analyses of power, privilege, justice, and injustice, emerged as the third most prominent theme in the data. For example, one respondent defined activism as "organizing people and resources to build power and challenge the status quo in the name of justice." Another respondent similarly argued that activism is "working in community/solidarity against (institutional/acts of) injustice, whether related to racial justice/inequality, gender inequality, LGBTQ+ rights/visibility/etc., economic inequality, migrant rights, etc. Using individuals' powers of varying levels/degrees/types to create a collective power that is inclusive and dynamic and works to fight institutional injustice, racism, sexism, oppressions of many kinds and effect change in some respect." The critical lens that undergirds this definition of activism, and others in our sample, supports sociopolitical development theory's contention that youth who assume mantles as activists have learned to fuse critical consciousness—that is, awareness and understanding of oppressive social forces—with action.

In addition to exemplifying sociopolitical consciousness, the quotation above is illustrative of the fourth most common theme in the data: the idea of solidarity or working *with* and *for* others. The conceptualization of activism as a collectivist activity included efforts to support or work on behalf of others. Several of the respondents described activism as leveraging one's own privilege to amplify the voices and needs of those with less privilege. One respondent wrote, "Toni Morrison said 'the function of freedom is to free some else.' As an extremely privileged individual, activism is me using my voice, my platform, my advantages to advocate for those who lack the platform and resources." Respondents highlighted the imperative to center or "uplift" the voices of the marginalized. For example, one of our respondents defined activism as "the conscious fight for improved conditions for marginalized groups of individuals." Another similarly argued that activism is "working though any and all channels necessary to enact change and improve the lives of subjugated people." A third wrote, "Activism is speaking up for oppressed

peoples to make a better world for first and foremost others and then yourself." The selflessness of this definition, the placing of others' needs ahead of one's own, was echoed by other respondents, including one who defined activism as "the desire to better our world through helping people and raising awareness of societal issues, sometimes even at the expense of our own well-being." The majority of the respondents who defined activism as something done with or for others held one or more vulnerable identity, as a person of color, low-income, or queer individual. Only 17% identified as straight, cisgender, white, and middle-class or affluent individuals. Though slightly more of these privileged individuals described activism in terms of doing for others, 43% referred to solidarity or the importance of acting in concert with oppressed people in their definitions.

Nearly the same number of respondents who recognized activism as a collective or selfless act saw it as a pointedly self-interested act and defined activism in intensely personal terms. For these respondents, activism is something done for one's self as much as, if not more than, for others. Many of the respondents who felt this way understood their activism as a means of survival and a means of liberation. One respondent explained, "Activism is self-preservation when your well-being is threatened. It is being loud and taking up space and forcing yourself to be acknowledged. It is being able to acknowledge oppression and actively work with others to dismantle it. It is advocating for yourself, and for others, whatever that may look like." Another argued, "Activism is working to change the conditions of society that oppress you and others, with whatever means you have to effect change." In contrast to the definitions that framed activism as a collective strategy, a definition expressed by one respondent who saw activism as highly personal read, "being unafraid to stand up for what's right, even if you're standing alone."

Regardless of whether they fought for themselves or others, respondents saw their activism as an extension or manifestation of their core values. It involved standing up for what they saw as right and fighting against what they knew to be wrong. The vast majority (82%) of those whose definition of activism included the theme of self-fueled or self-interested, rather than selfless, activism described themselves on the sur-

vey as low-income, queer, nonwhite, or some combination of those identities. Though it was less widespread in the data than the previous four themes, the idea of activism as an expression of the self was prevalent, particularly among those who had direct experiences with oppression and discrimination.

In summary, the definition of activism that emerges from our data is action taken to change an unjust status quo that adversely impacts others and/or oneself. Activism is both selfless and self-full. It can take many forms, large and small, traditional and nontraditional. It does not belong to one particularly ideology; however, it is closely aligned with one's personal values, beliefs, and morals. None of the activists in our sample defined activism in negative terms, as troublemaking or as futile.

How Student Activists Feel about the Label and Orient Their Activism

All participants in our study were included because they self-identify as student activists at some level; however, some openly embraced the term, while others showed greater ambivalence or discomfort labeling themselves as such. In analyzing the ways in which participants negotiated their relationship to the label, we looked at the various qualifiers participants offered when asked if they considered themselves student activists. We identified the unqualified responses as exemplifying "the outright activist." These responses were affirmative, enthusiastic, and unequivocal. The majority of respondents (67%) exemplified this stance. The other two main types we identified included "the unconventional activist" and "the uncomfortable activist."

The unconventional activists either sought to broaden the definition of activism to include the type of activities in which they were engaged or disputed the stereotypes associated with student activists. For example, when asked in an interview whether he considers himself an activist, one respondent replied:

> Short answer no, but long answer yes. . . . I feel like I do participate in different forms of activism. . . . I'm in a very left-leaning school where

> they kind of disregard any action of working within a system as activism; it's kind of like you're seen as selling out. And because I work pretty largely through student government and almost every summer, I've interned or worked in government offices, and I've stuck very closely with like public sector, everything that I've been seen as doing is seen as too conventional and not taking risks. . . . But I'm also the person that when people make protests and demands to administration as a school, I like take their demands and usually package it in a way for administration to understand what people want, and to really spell out feasible goals and next steps.

Even though his peers might argue that his work "inside the system" liaising with the administration is not a form of activism, he felt that he had an important role to play as an activist translating his peers' demands into action plans. He understood that his efforts did not fit the typical mold of student activist, one who is taking risks, applying pressure from the outside, and issuing ultimatums, but he felt that he did participate in alternative, legitimate forms of activism; therefore, he could claim the identity for himself.

The "uncomfortable activists" showed greater ambivalence than the unconventional activists. They felt conflicted about applying the term to themselves for any number of reasons, including feeling that they do not yet deserve to be recognized as activists. As one "uncomfortable activist" explained on the survey: "I'm not really an activist, per se. I've been interested in getting more directly involved in protest and reformative action, i.e., putting my money where my mouth is, but I have not done much more than participate in some protest actions, show solidarity in social media platforms, and work to educate myself and be a supportive ally in encouraging change. It's hard to answer these questions as an 'activist,' considering there are thousands of other people who have risked more and worked harder than I have to achieve the goals we both want." A handful of respondents shared the sentiment that they were "on their way" to becoming activists but had not yet "done enough" to warrant the title. They didn't want to give themselves more credit than they deserved. For them, the word *activist* carried

prestige, signaling a set of accomplishments they could not yet claim. Very few respondents among the "uncomfortable" group saw *activism* as "a dirty word," felt embarrassed about being seen as an activist, or indicated a preference for a term like *advocate*, *ally*, *organizer*, or *change agent*. This is an important point because it distinguishes the uncomfortable activists in this study from other students whose discomfort with being seen as an activist causes them to disengage from activist groups or work (see, for example, Warnock & Hurst, 2016).

In addition to examining feelings about the label *activist*, we examined the extent to which the modifier *student* applied to their social justice work. A majority of the respondents engaged in activism during their university years that extended beyond their college's or university's walls. We therefore sought to distinguish what we called inward-facing and outward-facing activism. Inward-facing activism focuses on changing university or college policies and practices; outward-facing activism concerns broader social issues or struggles. In outward-facing activism, the campus offers a stage on which to perform one's activism, but the institution itself is not the target of the students' demands or critique. Our survey results show that very few respondents saw their activism as pertaining exclusively to institutional policies and practices. Indeed, on the survey, most who selected university-specific policies as an issue area linked this work to broader struggles for economic justice, racial justice, climate justice, LGBTQIA rights, or gender equity. The majority of the sample (55%) blended outward- and inward-facing activism; however, a large share (45%) of respondents consisted of outward-facing activists who were not engaged in working to address campus or institutional policies or students' rights. Representing this latter group, one respondent explained, "Most activism on college campuses has to do with making changes to the campus itself, and I've never been too concerned with that—a campus is already a space of privilege, and I never wanted to channel energy into making it better when the city outside my campus is in more dire need of advocates."

In typical social science fashion, we ran cross-tabs and chi-square tests to explore how other dimensions of identity linked up with these orientations to activism (see tables 1.1 and 1.2). We found a small number

Table 1.1. Percentage of Survey Respondents in Each Identity Category by Activist Orientation and Causes

	Race/Ethnicity		SES			Gender			Sexuality		Top Three Causes		
	White	Non-white	L	M	U	M	W	DNS	Straight	LGBTQIA	Racial Justice	Gender Equality	LGBTQIA
Inward-facing	50	68	64	46	55	51	54	68	44	63	66	60	55
Outward-facing only	49	30	35	52	45	44	45	32	54	37	34	40	41

Note. SES = socioeconomic status; L = low-income; M = middle-class; U = upper-middle class or upper class; M = man, W = woman, DNS = do not subscribe to gender binaries.

Table 1.2. Percentage of Interview Respondents in Each Identity Category by Activist Type

	Race/Ethnicity		SES			Gender			Sexuality		Top Three Causes		
	White	Non-white	L	M	U	M	W	DNS	Straight	LGBTQIA	Racial Justice	Gender Equality	LGBTQIA
Outright	72	59	80	64	54	33	83	83	64	66	65	79	76
Uncomfortable	12	18	7	18	23	42	0	17	21	13	19	14	12
Unconventional	4	12	7	0	15	8	9	0	7	8	7	0	0
Combo	12	12	7	18	7	17	9	0	7	13	10	7	12

Note. SES = socioeconomic status; L = low-income; M = middle-class; U = upper-middle class or upper class; M = man, W = woman, DNS = do not subscribe to gender binaries.

of statistically significant results. More students of color and fewer white students than expected faced inward with their activism.[1] Similarly, more queer students than expected faced inward, while more straight students than expected faced outward. These findings suggest that students with minoritized identities were more likely than their counterparts to target campus policies and practices with their activism. Similarly, because so many of those involved in racial justice and gender equity campaigns faced inward, it seems that these struggles were largely focused on changing campus practices and policies.

In terms of comfort level with the term *activism*, more women and people who did not subscribe to gender binaries than expected were coded as "outright" activists, while fewer men than expected were represented in this category.[2] More men than expected emerged in the "uncomfortable activist" category. No other statistically significant differences in activist label or orientation surfaced with respect to race, class, or sexual orientation. Given research that indicates that students with minoritized identities often do not consider themselves activists, as their activism is so closely bound with survival (Linder & Rodriguez, 2012), it is noteworthy that sizeable majorities of the outright activists included students with one or more marginalized identities, including 59% of the nonwhite student activists, 80% of the low-income student activists, 83% of the women student activists, and 66% of the queer student activists.

An Activist Identity and Intersectionality

Though its definition is disputed by scholars,[3] *identity politics* generally refers to the radical political practice of a group of people who unite around a shared aspect of their identity that has served as a basis for experiences of oppression or discrimination. Some of the social movements that are emblematic of identity politics include the Feminist, Black Power, Chicano, and Gay Liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. In more recent times, Donald Trump's ascendancy has been linked to the rise of white identity politics. White voters who feared losing their status as the majority race because of demographic shifts flocked to

Trump for his promise to return to a time of unquestioned white supremacy. His presidency has therefore revived debates about identity politics and its role as a mobilizing force in the 2016 election (Mason & Wronski, 2018).

There is some support for identity-based activism in this study. Perhaps not surprisingly, larger percentages of women than men embraced the cause of gender equality. Similarly, greater percentages of nonwhite student activists than white activists hinged their activism to racial justice, and higher shares of LGBTQIA students organized around LGBTQIA issues than their straight counterparts (see table 1.3).[4]

At the same time, the relationship between student activists' identities and the causes they embraced is more nuanced than can be understood by focusing only on a single dimension of their identity or by focusing on the politics of particular identity groups. For example, more queer students than expected and more women and people who do not subscribe to gender binaries were aligned with struggles for racial justice.[5] More queer students than expected embraced the cause of gender equality, and more women than expected fought for LGBTQIA rights.

One respondent, Paul, further highlights the limits of trying to understand someone's activism either by focusing on a discrete dimension of their identity or by profiling them as a representative of a class of people. A straight, white, cisgender man with an upper-middle-class, Christian background, Paul identifies as an NRA member and actively campaigns for Second Amendment rights, both on campus and in the world beyond. Paul also identifies as a Democrat and believes in LGBTQIA rights. He relishes encounters in which people tell him that they "didn't realize that people could be A and B, and C and D." They will say to him, "'I thought you could only be the first two or second two.' Showing people that intellectual diversity still really matters, and that intellectual diversity still does exist, especially in the era of identity politics that we're in right now. . . . We get this feeling that if you don't believe in these certain things, then you are in the outgroup, or even worse, you don't exist." Although Paul does represent an outlier in our data with his more libertarian views, his words serve as a potent reminder that people's identities are more layered than a single dimension

Table 1.3. Percentage of Survey Respondents in Each Identity Category by Cause

	Race/Ethnicity		SES			Gender			Sexuality	
	White	Non-white	L	M	U	M	W	DNS	Straight	LGBTQ
Racial justice	68	84**	83	69	72	56	73**	89	71	75***
Gender equality	72	65	76	73	65	38	76***	86	54	83***
LGBTQIA	70	60	74	63	68	49	68**	89	45	87***

Note. SES = socioeconomic status; L = low-income; M = middle-class; U = upper-middle class or upper class; M = man, W = woman, DNS = do not subscribe to gender binaries. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

of their identity might suggest, especially when viewed through the lens of identity politics.

The finding that so few of the activists in this study identified as single-issue activists speaks to the current generation's dissatisfaction with using narrow identity categories as the basis for social activism. Our respondents largely recognized identity as more complex and multidimensional than a single category; therefore, they were compelled to be active in more movements than one organized around only a particular facet of identity. For example, one respondent explained how her multiple identities informed her activism: "As an activist my issues are most closely tied to my identity. I identify as a Chicana woman. Because I am connected not only to my Mexican American heritage, but I am also connected to what is happening here in [State], a lot of my issues revolve around immigration, around women's rights, around school, specifically like higher education and how students of color are treated, and overall just human rights issues." Branching from different dimensions of her identity (ethnicity, gender, and student status), her various activist causes were all rooted in a commitment to human rights and social justice.

Although some identity categories certainly remain salient in moving people to call for change, particularly those categories that are linked directly to experiences of discrimination or injustice, these experiences alone fail to explain why some people with that identity choose to act and others do not. They also fail to account for the involvement of people in the movement who do not hold that identity. It is important, therefore, to ask how activists believe their various identities shape their activism. Reviewing the literature on identity politics, Bernstein (2005) has called for more research on "how activists themselves understand the sources of their identities" (p. 67), noting that much of the theorizing rests on "untested assumptions about how activists understand their identities" (p. 50). In the context of their activist identity, which other identities do student activists feel are relevant and why? If, as Shira and others in this study argued, "the LGBTQ community needs the support of straight allies and the Black community needs the support of white

allies," how is it that people with more privileged identities come to recognize their privilege and act to advance the liberation of those without the same privileges? How do their privileged identities constrain and enable them in the movements they choose to join?

When asked an open-ended question, "In what ways has your identity shaped your involvement in activism," survey participants responded in one of four ways: by referencing a particular dimension of their identity in relation to their motivation or engagement in activism; by discussing the intersection of more than one dimension of their identity with their activism; by eschewing typical identity categories and describing only their values, personal qualities, or core beliefs as these informed their activism; or by alluding to neither a particular dimension of their identity nor their values and beliefs. The various dimensions of their identities that respondents singled out included socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, political orientation, religion, citizenship status, and (dis)ability as well as identities associated with professional roles (artist, engineer), body image, first-generation college student status, and experiences with sexual assault or mental health issues. Table 1.4 reveals the percentage of respondents who gave each type of answer and offers a representative quotation for each.

Although their affiliation with a particular identity group remained foremost for some respondents, the fact that only 27% pointed to a single identity category in responding to this question further highlights the inadequacy of a narrowly defined identity politics for this generation.

The largest share of survey respondents (46%) identified how different dimensions of their identity factored into their activism. Several of these respondents used the language of intersectionality when reflecting on these various dimensions, a few even citing Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) pioneering work on the concept. For example, one student explained that her "identity as a queer woman and intersectional feminist has definitely shaped my involvement in activism." She continued, "Since I have been politically minded since before same-sex marriage was legal, I know the struggles my own community faces, and I aim to be an ally

Table 1.4. How Respondents Discussed Their Identities in Relation to Their Activism

Response type	Percentage	Example
1 dimension of identity	27	I think I've become more involved in activism because I'm a woman, and I am constantly trying to compensate for the limited power this gives me. I'm much louder, more decisive, and more engaged because I worry about slipping into the role that is expected for me: quiet, fickle, detached.
More than 1 dimension	46	I don't think I would be engaged in the activism I am involved in if it weren't for my queer and disabled identities.
No dimension, only values, beliefs, or personal qualities	15	My passion for people and creating a better world for everyone has strongly shaped my attitudes towards activism. In particular, community- oriented approaches are my main focus.
None of the above	12	My identity was not foremost in my mind when I first got involved in activism, although I think it has definitely since then affected the kinds of activist narratives and frames that I take up and feel passionate about. For example, I identified much more strongly with the framing of climate justice (especially as it intersects with race, dis/ability, and gender) as opposed to environmentalism and conservation, which drew me to the growing student movement.

for other communities who face similar struggles." Another respondent reflected: "I'm at the intersection of a lot of oppressive forces, and I'm quite privileged. When I learned about intersectionality, oppression, and many other issues in my social sciences and humanities courses, I realized I had to utilize my voice and awareness to advocate for change." An awareness of how power and privilege interact with the various dimensions of their identity enabled student activists not just to connect with different causes but also to draw linkages across these causes. Their intersectional analysis, then, extended from their own identities to issues, as they came to recognize interlocking systems of oppression. Indeed, privilege and marginalization emerged as prominent themes in respondents' reflections on their identities as well.

More than one third of the survey respondents (38%) identified experiences with oppression or discrimination as core aspects of their

identity that had shaped their involvement in activism, while just under one quarter of respondents (23%) pointed to the salience of their privilege. A small share of the answers to this prompt (8%) on the survey included discussion of both privileged and marginalized identities.

Survey respondents who mentioned their experiences with marginalization, discrimination, or oppression often explained that these experiences led them to want to fight not only for themselves and others like them but also for others unlike them who were subject to similar oppressive forces. For example, one respondent wrote, "My experience being gay and the oppression I have experienced as a result has led me to become more involved not only in the fight for LGBTQ equality, but for justice for all." Another respondent active in animal rights campaigns reflected, "Being identified as a woman by other people in society has put me in a position where I have less privilege than some others in society, and it has allowed me to draw strong parallels between injustice against women and injustice against nonhuman animals." It is noteworthy that this respondent highlighted not how they see themselves but how others see them. This response further underscores the complexity of identity. Identity is not simply a matter of self-perception. Identity is also a function of social ascriptions and assumptions based on a person's appearance and the privileges or disadvantages that society accordingly dispenses. Identity is as much a social construction as it is a psychological construct.

Those who acknowledged their privilege tended to write about how this privilege led them to want to serve as allies or accomplices to people experiencing oppression, rather than to position themselves at the forefront of the change efforts. One respondent wrote about how her privileged identities have shown her the importance of "continuing to be in solidarity with other groups without perpetuating their oppression." Another who acknowledged her "immense privilege" as a "white, currently middle-class, US citizen" explained, "When I did activism related to diversity and establishing an intercultural center on campus, I made sure that my work was more behind-the-scenes and that I was not the face of the movement, because white women are not a group that

needs to be the face of diversity." A third echoed, "I realize my privilege and that I cannot lead the movement. A white person should not be a leader in the race war."

By contrast, some respondents acknowledged that their privilege endowed them with greater opportunities as activists than their less privileged counterparts. One respondent wrote, "I am just very aware of my privilege as a white person, and I think that it gives me even more room to act." Another reflected: "My whiteness is usually my most salient identity in activist contexts. I am constantly aware of the privilege it affords me and that affects how I engage with protesting and other actions. In particular, I think it protects me during protests and causes me to be taken more seriously in formal institutional settings." Although white privilege was the most often invoked privileged identity, it was not the only one. Some respondents referred to their financial means and others to their status as cisgender or able-bodied as they explained how these privileged identities facilitated their activism.

Interview respondents shed further light on how the complicated interplay of one's various identities can affect both one's motivation as an activist and the nature of one's activism. Yeej, first described in the introduction, explained that his Hmong, low-income, and gay identities have meant that he has been "living the experience of oppression throughout my whole life." He attributed his activism directly to those experiences. At the same time, he recognized that his student identity endows him with privilege: "Identifying as a student activist has a special implication because as students, we have a higher voice in society regardless of race, class, and culture etc. . . . Students have a lot of power that is often overlooked. I consider myself as a *student* activist because it means I have unique access to different opportunities to advance the social changes I want to see within and beyond my campus." As someone who has been privileged with educational opportunities and resources, Yeej felt a keen sense of responsibility to work on behalf of oppressed communities that have not had the same advantages extended to them as he has. This sense of responsibility inspired him not only to work to safeguard campus services and programs for future generations of historically underrepresented students but also to work in "under-

privileged" communities to "help them gain more access to higher education." Through these efforts, he hoped to contribute to breaking cycles of oppression.

Unlike Yeej, Carla did not grow up in an oppressed community, and her privilege was a function of more than simply her student identity. Nevertheless, like Yeej, Carla was determined to "make sure the voice of those who need help is heard and to protect the rights of marginalized or oppressed groups." A reproductive rights and mental health activist, whose activism addressed issues of sexual assault and immigrant rights as well, Carla explained, "I recognize that as a white woman from a relatively affluent family, I have a lot of privilege, but rather than just sit here all alone with my privilege, I want to be able to help those who don't have the same amount of privilege as me." Carla felt a personal connection to the causes toward which she directed her energy. Her best friend was raped in high school, and she knew many people who struggled with mental health challenges. Carla reflected, "I'm not doing it [activism] for any sort of recognition but just . . . this is about people I love and care about, and I want to do anything I can to further them and create progress."

Based on their demographic profiles, Carla and Yeej could not have been more different from each other. One grew up in extreme poverty; the other was fortunate to travel around the world with her parents to 78 different countries and each of the seven continents. One has experienced multiple forms of discrimination, due to his race, class, and sexual orientation; the other has only indirect or secondhand experience with violence and marginalization, having been exposed to accounts of other people's pain.

Despite these differences, both understand how the unjust exercise of power maintains vectors of privilege and oppression in society. As Carla observed, "One of the reasons that these issues exist and why we have to fight for them is that laws and whatnot are created by people with a whole lot of privilege who haven't considered the other side." Both Carla and Yeej demonstrate high levels of critical consciousness.

In addition to having developed an understanding of how the forces of oppression operate in society, both Carla and Yeej have forged rela-

tionships that connect them to the history of social activism. Yeej apprenticed himself to adult staff mentors on campus who were student activists in their own day, and Carla described speaking often with an aunt who was a student activist when she was in college and who remains a proud feminist activist today.

A third important point of similarity between Carla and Yeej is that the activism each practices aims to transform their schools into places where all individuals can thrive, where there are strong social safety nets, and where individualistic notions of competition and personal gain give way to collective commitments to the common good. Where Yeej has focused on enhancing and protecting supports for historically underrepresented groups and broadening access to higher education, Carla has focused on improving counseling services for students who struggle with mental health conditions or the trauma of sexual violence. Using the instruments of student government and grassroots organizing, both Yeej and Carla have championed a vision of their university and of society that challenges the neoliberal ideals of individual advancement in a free-market system. With their high levels of critical consciousness, their attention to the historical sweep of activism, and their vision of a more democratic, inclusive institution that is committed to ensuring and safeguarding the collective good, they exemplify neoactivism in the neoliberal university.

Carla and Yeej are but two representatives of neoactivism. They also happen to be outright activists whose activism faces both inward and outward. As different as their backgrounds and primary causes may be, their activism is similarly inspired by feelings of moral obligation and directed toward effecting social justice and ending oppression.

Unlike Yeej and Carla, a small number of non-neoactivists populated our sample of self-identifying student activists, including 7% of the survey respondents and a handful of interview participants. Compared to the neoactivists, more of the non-neoactivists identified as white, middle-class, and heterosexual. Though the majority of non-neoactivsts in our sample are women, this group contains a greater share of men than the neoactivist sample does. Compared to 76% of the neoactivists, only 38% of the non-neoactivists possess one or more vulnerable identities,

including being a person of color, queer, gender nonconforming, or poor (see table 1.5). Their levels of passion and commitment to their causes, their use of social media, and their attention to self-care did not differentiate them from the neoactivists. They did, however, diverge in the number of issues their activism addresses,[6] their overall levels of critical consciousness, and their prioritization of individual liberties over public interest or the common good. None of the definitions of activism that they wrote on the survey included a discussion of privilege, oppression, or injustice. Similarly, whereas 54% of the neoactivist sample reflected on how their privileged or marginalized identities shaped their activism, only three (18%) of the non-neoactivist group did so. When articulated in interviews, their visions for the future tended to support smaller, less intrusive governments, personal responsibility, and individual freedoms, more in line with a neoliberal ideal than a neoactivist social imaginary.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on illuminating what it means to be an activist, how the current generation of student activists feels about adopting the mantle, and how other dimensions of their identity intersect with and inform their activist identity. Although their definitions of activism coalesced around particular themes—taking action, effecting change, and targeting oppression and injustice—differences emerged in how the student activists have negotiated their identities as activists. While it is possible to identify trends in the data—patterns, frequencies, averages—these numbers can mask the complex ways in which student activists navigate what it means for them to be an activist, especially as their activist identity relates to other aspects of their identity.

Scholars have various ways of conceptualizing identity, including identity as a core sense of self, identity as performance, and identity as positioning. Within the context of social movements, identity is sometimes studied as a tool that is strategically deployed (Bernstein, 2005; Conner & Rosen, 2015). Movement actors may emphasize certain dimensions of their identities in a bid for recognition, respect, and redis-

Table 1.5. Percentage of Neoactivists and Non-neoactivists by Identity Markers

	Race/Ethnicity		SES			Gender			Sexuality		Vulnerable Identity
	White	Non-white	L	M	U	M	W	DNS	Straight	Queer	1 or more
Non-neoactivist (*N* = 17)	79	21	21	57	22	29	59	12	85	15	38
Neoactivist (*N* =212)	69	31	31	32	36	21	67	12	43	57	76

Note. SES = socioeconomic status; L = low-income; M = middle-class; U = upper-middle class or upper class; M = man, W = woman, DNS = do not subscribe to gender binaries.

tributed resources. Sometimes activists invent new terms to assert their identities. For example, the term *Muxerista* refers to women who identify as Chicana or Latina and as feminist or womanist (Revilla, 2004). Because an activist identity assumes action, it is an identity that is both constructed internally and performed externally. It is useful to consider both dimensions of the activist identity to fully appreciate the complexity of the phenomenon.

Like identity, the process of identity development has been studied in a variety of ways; however, the scholarship on *activist* identity development is relatively thin. The next chapter helps address that gap in the literature by examining how the process of activist identity development unfolded for participants in this study.

[TWO]

Becoming an Activist

The Turn toward Activism

Blake, a white, middle-class, gender-fluid college junior, asserts that "definitely my life will be organized around activism once I graduate." Although primarily a species equality and animal liberation activist, Blake has developed a broad passion for activism. "I'm pretty comfortable saying I'll spend the rest of my life in the movement or in movements in general."

How did Blake come to such a strong identity and deep commitment? Blake believes that activism found them, rather than the other way around. "It was the best, I wouldn't even say decision that I've made, but just *thing* that's ever happened to me that I got pulled into activism." This "pull" took some time, and Blake is hard-pressed to describe when and how they became an activist. Attending a middle school that had a service requirement may have planted a seed; having parents who inculcated an ethic of noblesse oblige may have also played a part. Blake reflects, "I think some part of me might have always been curious about [activism], but I just had no idea how to enter that world. . . . Even by the time I was in college, I still didn't have a window into it."

An animal ethics course, taken freshman year, inspired Blake to become a vegan, but what Blake would consider their activism "didn't manifest immediately, that's for sure." Blake recalled tagging along with

a friend to an animal rights protest shortly after the animal ethics course had ended: "I enjoyed it at the time, and I think I just thought to myself, 'Oh, I'm sure glad people are doing this.' And then I walked away and didn't look back." Months later, Blake attended a teach-in about speciesism, which made them begin to think, "This *is* something I actually want to spend time on." But it wasn't until they "stumbled into a meeting of this [animal rights] student club on campus" that Blake began "seeing myself as an activist and collecting those skills." Blake recalls that the club "was basically six people sitting in a basement once a week just talking about how screwed up the world was. We didn't really know how to act on that, but we inspired each other." After attending a week-long animal liberation conference in the summer, the group became more knowledgeable and more active.

There was no singular moment that defined Blake's activist becoming story, and they attribute their journey into activism to a "pretty unlikely course of events," but Blake recalled that becoming more educated and more passionate about the issues meant that "there was much more of an obligation." Blake felt unable to "allow yourself this narrative of, 'Oh, well, someone else will take care of it. . . . Oh, I'm sure I wouldn't be helpful here; I don't have any special skills.' " They continued, "I certainly did not have any special skills when I started out organizing, but it was like, 'Well no! No one else is going to do it.' That sort of obligation." This sense of obligation, not just to practice veganism but also to confront those who slaughter, sell, and consume animals' bodies, to liberate animals, and to fight for a constitutional amendment protecting nonhuman animals, has come to define Blake's college career as well as their postgraduation plans. Although it is clear that Blake is a passionate activist who strongly self-identifies as such, a number of different people and episodes spread out over the course of two years worked to pull Blake into activism.

What are the various pathways that youth follow into activism? Are they slowly drawn in, like Blake, or do they make an intentional choice to become an activist? Is there a sudden moment of awakening, or does the sense of activist obligation dawn on them more gradually? This chapter explores when, how, and why self-identifying student activists

become activists, analyzing interview respondents' accounts of their journeys into activism alongside several key findings from the survey data.

Conceptualizing the Turn toward Activism

In the broader literature on activism and social movements, researchers tend to stress the importance of key moments that propel people toward social activism. Mark Warren (2010), in his study of white adults who take up social justice activism, refers to these moments as "seminal experiences," which often include moments of moral shock. In her research on the pathways to activist participation, Hahrie Han (2009) calls them a triggering event, and Heidi Holeman, in her study of youth activists, highlights the importance of epiphanies. Holeman (2007) argues that "epiphanies played a major role in calling these activists awake" and marked "turning points or crucial moments in their development" (p. 75).

In contrast to this research, only 32% of the survey respondents in our study could identify a key moment that galvanized them to take action. In interviews and open-ended comments on the survey, most respondents described a process of gradually becoming more aware and involved. As one respondent put it, "It came more from growing awareness than some radical euphoric change." One activist, who indicated on her survey that she had experienced a triggering moment and went on to describe it in vivid detail in the interview, later reflected, "When we were talking about kind of what led to my activism—I'm remembering a little more now—I think like maybe, it was a little more gradual than I might have described." Another respondent who reported on the survey that she didn't become an activist until college, remarked at the end of her interview, "The only thing that I thought of earlier was that I forgot I *did* actually start activism in high school." She went on to recount her experience directing a play that she intentionally chose to spark critical conversations in her school community about gender identity. She concluded, "So I would say even more strongly now that I was more of an activist in high school than I usually think." While activists could certainly recall memorable moments that marked their

careers as activists, rarely was the birth of their activist identity or their journey into activism clearly demarcated by a galvanizing moment or realization. Many respondents, in fact, struggled to pinpoint when, where, and how their journeys as activists began.

Given the nuance and complexity in our data, we conceptualize the process of forming an activist identity as *turning toward activism*, sometimes with misgivings or confusion, until one is squarely facing in that direction and moving forward with that identity. We do not limit such forward movement and evidence of commitment to the outright activists, as our data reveal that even the uncomfortable and unconventional activists planned to continue their activism through college, after college, and into their careers. Chi-square analyses revealed no association between activist type and intentions to continue activism. After all, 93% of the survey respondents believed that they would remain engaged as activists into their adulthood and intended to incorporate activism into their careers after graduation.

The turn toward activism has three salient features. First, it typically has an imperceptible rather than a distinctive beginning. While 42% of the survey respondents came to see themselves as activists in high school or even earlier, and 58% of the respondents felt that they didn't become activists until college, many of those we interviewed struggled to identify the moment that they first became involved in activism. Second, the turn can proceed swiftly, slowly, or in fits and starts, but it usually does not advance in a steady, cumulative fashion. Committing to social activism and claiming an activist identity were not part of a tidy, linear process sparked by a clear catalyst and marked by discernible stages. Rather, the process of developing an activist identity tended to be more gradual and halting than continuous and additive. Third, the turn implicates action *and* cognition, as youth develop their practice and align their worldview and social analysis with their behavior. As they turn toward activism, youth engage in active experimentation, ample reflection, and knowledge accumulation. Certainly these three activities continue even after they have completed their turns and claimed identities as activists, but every turn includes both behavioral and cognitive components. These turns are illustrated by the cases of Sam, Priya, Paul, and

Juan. Sam and Priya say they adopted the identity of activist before college, while Paul and Juan felt they became activists during college.

Sam: "Seeing something that's so real . . . makes you feel like you have to contribute"

A white, upper-middle-class, cisgendered, heterosexual young man, Sam indicated on his survey that he became an activist in high school, and, like one third of the survey respondents, he did recall a triggering event that moved him to action. During his senior year, Hurricane Sandy hit his state. This weather event caused "the most direct impact that I've had from climate change: just having like school canceled and having a torrential downpour. It felt super real, and seeing the footage from the floods in New York City and all of those intense subway floodings got me excited about how big the issue was." In response to the storm, Sam decided to organize a rally about climate change. He created a pamphlet that included facts about climate change as well as a list of actions one could take, like calling legislators and turning out for the rally he had organized. He recruited six friends to head out during the storm, going door-to-door to pass out the pamphlets and talk to people about climate change. He recalled that his friends took some cajoling to participate: "They were resistant because it would be raining, and [it was] just like a weird time to do the things, but . . . we had some cool interactions, and my friend brought a camera and we made a little informative video about our day, and I wouldn't say it was super impactful, but I think I learned about like how to organize an effective protest. . . . It was sort of like my first experimenting with activism."

Although Sam saw Hurricane Sandy as a trigger event that helped him assume the identity of activist, he had engaged in activist activities, such as walkouts and marches, prior to organizing the Hurricane Sandy rally. During his high school years, he was involved in a number of direct actions. He recalled participating in school walkouts along with his classmates and teachers and traveling to Washington, DC, to march in the People's Climate March, with a mentor from his church who suggested they attend together.

His public high school had an activist ethos. He described it as "super radical" and continued, "We had a lot of teachers who taught from the *People's History of the United States*, you know that textbook that has activist history? So that was the sort of attitude in the high school. I was never organizing stuff, but I was participating and overhearing the language of protests." He credits this high school atmosphere with helping him acquire the language, skills, and tools of activism, and preparing him to make the move from participating to leading when Hurricane Sandy hit.

Despite all that he had learned from organizing the Hurricane Sandy rally during his senior year of high school, when Sam entered college the following year, he would not consider himself a "hardcore student activist," let alone a leader. "I was just kind of floating around into groups," he recalled. Over time, however, his participation in various groups deepened, and he began to assume greater responsibility, inspired by the culture of his college, mentoring from older friends, and events in the outside world, like the Ferguson protests in the summer of 2014. Watching the livestream from Ferguson with his college friends, he experienced a similar emotional reaction to what he felt while watching the coverage of Hurricane Sandy: "Seeing something that's so real and . . . so important, there's just an emotional relevance that . . . makes you feel like you have to contribute." This confluence of factors contributed to his growing involvement in activism.

As a junior, he became involved in activism related to his university's endowment and its financial investments as well as proposed tuition hikes; he helped spearhead an effort to establish a seat for a student representative on his university's board of trustees; and he helped found his school's chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice. His work on a targeted fossil fuel divestment campaign at his school led him to attend a national conference to learn more about fossil fuel divestment, and he participated in regular calls with the Coalition for Responsible Endowments. In addition, he made a point of calling legislators weekly about pending bills, and he began engaging in deep canvassing, talking to peers on rural college campuses about their racial and eco-justice efforts.

Despite his involvement, Sam expressed some ambivalence about

whether he could be considered a student activist. He harbored guilt about "not putting in enough labor or taking charge." He described much of his activist work as making "sure logistics are working, so I'm kind of in the background." On the one hand, Sam noted, "there's a lot of times where I could take charge of a campaign and really move things along, and I don't step up, and then the kind of things I do choose to like take charge of, they never feel like sort of activist in that regard." On the other hand, he hadn't "had a huge period of time [in college] without activism," and his schedule was so full of meetings for various activist groups that he didn't have "time and breathing space to relax and think about art," his academic minor. Sam showed symptoms of both the uncomfortable activist, who doesn't think he does enough to deserve the title, and the unconventional activist, who does things, like maintain a listserv or build a website for a campaign, that he believes to be activism but that others might not regard as such.

Despite his reticence about the depth of his activism, Sam expected to continue in activism throughout college, after college, and into his career working in a nonpartisan governmental agency "with a leftist cause." He intended to participate in "whatever national rally is in DC." As he looked to his future, he "aspire[d] to have more victories and have more things done under [his activist] belt." He was not about to abandon his activist identity.

Priya: "When I came to college I kind of realized there's a name for standing up and doing things that I've been doing since high school"

On her survey, Priya indicated that she became an activist in high school. During her interview, she reported that the "first time that I realized what I was doing was complete activism" was in ninth grade when she began participating in a school peer diversity program. She explained that she became one of a group of student leaders trained to deliver a classroom event focusing on engaging students in a discussion of prejudice and stereotypes, asking fundamental questions about students' core beliefs. Priya drew strength from this "very powerful" experience

because these issues were "the basic core things that I believe in, that every student should do and speak up for those who don't have a voice or those who are afraid." The reactions from fellow students who wanted to get involved, were inspired by her work, or who could personally relate were gratifying and spurred Priya's further involvement in activism as well as a growing sense of agency in tackling issues of discrimination and creating change.

Although Priya believed that she became an activist in high school through this work in the peer diversity program, she described in her interview that by joining organizations in college, she finally could "have a title as a student activist" and engage in more direct ways. Priya viewed her high school and college activism as different and reflected on how her involvement evolved from "a much more low-key, in-person kind of activism," where she was an approachable ally and resource for students on topics like diversity, to the direct protest and solidarity actions she had engaged in since starting college. Part of this difference stemmed from the existing opportunity structures at universities, which enabled and encouraged student creation, action, and leadership in more ways than she experienced in high school. Although the types of activism Priya participated in had grown and changed over time, the high school peer program influenced her continuing belief that an important component of activism is helping make "people think, reflect, and talk" about issues.

Priya did not recognize a "key moment" that propelled her into activism. She did acknowledge that efforts on other college campuses were "somewhat motivating" to her own involvement in activism. Specifically, she cited "the Hands Up, Don't Shoot movement, Take Back the Night, and the Clothesline Project" as national efforts that translated to on-campus opportunities for direct engagement. The Hands Up, Don't Shoot movement was connected to nationwide protests of police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement on and off college campuses, and both Take Back the Night and the Clothesline Project focused on ending all forms of domestic and sexual violence. Entering college and seeing these other examples from fellow students helped Priya recognize that throughout her life, "I just kind of put myself into that activist

position, without even realizing it, and when I came to college I kind of realized there's a name for standing up and doing things that I've been doing since high school." Priya did not look back on any of these particular points as those that individually sparked her development as an activist. Significant moments and movements punctuated her turn toward activism, but it was the collective experiences of them that had shaped Priya's development as an activist.

Priya identified as an outright, multi-issue activist, with passions including racial justice, educational equity, criminal justice reform/policing practices, immigrant rights/antideportation campaigns, and sexual assault. She explained that her experience growing up in a household with an abusive father helped motivate her to want to "join a platform where I can advocate for [the victims of] domestic violence abuse and talk against it." This personal connection prompted her involvement in her sorority's philanthropic mission of "combating domestic violence" in the yearly Take Back the Night campaign on her campus and in the university-wide campaign for the Clothesline Project. As a South Asian American, Priya also engaged in activism as the president of the Asian American Student Union at her university and worked to "bring awareness on to campus about who we are and having to get a sense of unity within the Asian American community." She felt that her different identities as a low-income, first-generation student of color; a Sikh; and the daughter of a woman who had been abused had shaped her to be someone who "fights for what is right," and her activism reflected her growing awareness and personal development. She explained:

> My identity as a Sikh South-Asian American, first-generation college female has extremely shaped my involvement in activism. I am basically a walking image of all the minorities in the United States that lack voice. My entire life has been shaped by the mockery and false assumptions about what I look like, what I believe in, where I came from, and what I want to do. Thus, as president of the Asian American Student Union and founder and president of the Sikh Student Association at my university, my involvement beyond academics is all about what I want to be an activist for.

As a student leader, Priya often coordinated with other groups and leaders across campus when responding to bias-related incidents and integrated the need for dialogue with direct action. She described two instances since the 2016 presidential election where rallies and marches were organized following the appearance of racial slurs targeting members of Jewish and Muslim faiths across campus. Priya explained the pull she felt to engage in activism, since "as a student leader, people look up to me to a certain point," but also "because I'm passionate about it, because it shouldn't be happening to any community." Various dimensions of Priya's identity, which have shaped her throughout her life, have worked in combination with her developing activist identity to influence why and how she engages in activist work.

Priya believed her activism so far had been moderately effective, but she saw it as ongoing. On the survey, she wrote, "I see the change sometimes, but it's not enough for me." She planned to stay involved in activism throughout college and after graduation, envisioning "in my free time, . . . being an advocate for my community, family, and friends." Priya's experience as an activist has changed over time, just as she has, and it seemed likely that her activism would continue to evolve as she found new ways to integrate her commitments and concerns into her postcollegiate life.

Paul: "When I look around and I feel like no one else is doing what needs to be done, I'm like, 'Well, I guess I have to do it.'"

Paul, introduced in chapter 1, is a passionate defender of the Second Amendment of the US Constitution. He founded and serves as president of the Second Amendment Rights club on his campus. Identifying as a white, "pretty well off," cisgender, heterosexual man, Paul acknowledges "my identity, my birthright—for lack of a better term—has meant that I have never had to worry about [being victimized] much, but my religion and my humanity call me to care about those who do. People need the ability to defend themselves if need be, and the best force equalizer in any defensive scenario is a firearm." Quick with statistics and accounts of assaults on his own campus, Paul believes that it is

particularly important for poor people, LGBTQ folks, and women to have the right to bear arms on and off campus. Before he graduates, he hopes to link his club with a national organization, Students for Concealed Carry.

Though Paul does not believe his activism started "in any official capacity until I got into university," he acknowledged that he has always been someone who will "speak up" when he perceives "that something is wrong or problematic and needs to be addressed . . . even if it means being the odd man out." Paul traces this willingness back to his high school experience, when he found himself disagreeing with the messages his conservative Christian high school promoted about homosexuality. Paul recalled that he "just couldn't tolerate" the notions being pushed by his school that "homosexuality is fundamentally sinful. . . . I didn't feel I could abide that, so I left the faith." Though he would later return to the church, he became an atheist as a sophomore in high school. Looking back, he believes that "being formed in a way in that hostile environment as an atheist at a Christian high school had a lot [to do with] my development." He continued, "It shaped me into being someone who doesn't really mind being the odd man out if it seems like necessary." Standing apart from the dominant group to stand up for his values was, for Paul, an early experiment with what he calls "individual activism."

Although his campus is "pretty moderate" politically, and "it shouldn't theoretically [have been] that hard for me to find someone who agrees with me," Paul did have to work hard to find an advisor and enough students willing to sign his petition to start the Second Amendment club. Again, his comfort with "being the odd man out" helped him persevere and eventually succeed. Though his club now has some strong officers and he feels confident that it will continue to remain in existence once he graduates, Paul admits that because he is the "most outspoken of the group, I end up as default taking the lead during the meetings" and "running point" on most club events. Starting the club and running its events marked a turning point for Paul when his activism transitioned from being "more individual and less of an actual in the active role of activism, as it were, [to] like trying to actually take charge in a way."

Paul wanted to take charge on this issue because he had grown frustrated by a dynamic he saw emerge in the wake of every mass shooting, in which NRA supporters, gun control activists, and politicians would retreat to their respective corners. "I just felt like neither side really painted a fair picture of what people on the ground believed and what I believed." Paul had long been interested in the issue of gun rights, and he followed the debates closely online. "Even before the idea of [starting the club] was really sparked, I kept up with the issue—even before I thought like, 'Oh, I could probably do something about this,' mainly just by reading different news sources." Paul made a point of reading widely and not just "from one particular narrative." On his survey, Paul referenced "the horrifically tragic attack on our LGBT brothers and sisters in Orlando" at the Pulse nightclub as one time when he felt alienated by the national conversation. In his interview, he recalled that "there were several events kind of back to back, definitely not the least of which was the police shootings in Dallas." As he reflected on what had finally catalyzed him to take action," he said:

> These are things that recur over and over, but it seems . . . I don't know if it's a factor of my age or what it is, but it just felt like things were kind of coming to a head, and I was like, "Someone needs to do something about this!" And if everyone just stands around saying, "Somebody needs to do something," and no one actually does anything, then nothing gets done. So I decided that I'm going to stop standing here and saying, "Somebody needs to do something," and say "I'm doing something."

While it is difficult for Paul to point to one incident that "finally pushed me over the edge," the cumulative effect of mass shootings and the predictable rhetoric that accompanied them built his resolve to pursue the process of forming the club. Paul is proud of the work he has done through his club to foster dialogue on campus, to educate his peers, and to advocate for the "fundamental individual right to keep and bear arms."

More politically aligned with non-neoactivism than neoactivism, Paul sees himself as an unconventional activist whose activism faces both inward and outward. He describes himself as an "activist, asterisk," explaining that he is an activist "not in as much as the general definition

might be of you know someone who goes out and protests or hosts rallies or even like attends large political gatherings but more in the, not casual, but more intimately intentional sort of way that you make relationships with people and you're open toward them asking questions and that you are there to be a resource rather than there to necessarily hawk a cause [or] to soap box." For Paul, activism is relational and educational work.

As he considers his future plans, Paul is certain that he will remain involved in Second Amendment activism, in both his personal and professional lives. In the long-term, he intends to become an Episcopalian priest, but in the short-term, he is considering taking a position with the NRA. He believes that both the Democratic Party and the NRA need to reform their stances in the gun debate. As a member of both groups and a self-proclaimed "big believer in changing groups from the inside," he expects that he will continue "working within the Democratic Party to push for [change] at a local level," and he speculates that "as an actual employee of [the NRA], I think I could bring a more nuanced, more calm—for lack of a better word—demeanor to some dialogue." Because he feels strongly that he is on the right side of justice and human rights and because he has proved to himself that he is capable of taking the lead on an issue few seem willing to address, he feels a strong sense of responsibility to move the work forward.

Juan: "It's the right thing to do. . . . So why wouldn't I, if I can?"

A first-generation college student, Juan went into college expecting that he would become an activist, even though he didn't consider himself one in high school. He anticipated that he would be able to use his degree to "do so much for my community and save them all." But his understanding of activism and his intended major changed in striking ways once he arrived on campus and began to get involved in labor organizing. He recalled, "The way I viewed activism was like, in high school, you have this one leader, like this MLK or Cesar Chavez that would lead a ton of people, but now that I'm here and like actually doing the work, I think that it's like really not that. It's a ton of organizing and getting people

out and mobilizing people to advocate for themselves, as opposed to being like, 'Let me come save you.' " As he learned more about community organizing, Juan shifted from wanting to major in international politics or international relations and work for the State Department to "the complete opposite. . . . I'm doing culture and politics, and I really want to do like community organizing." He credited both his political philosophy class and his experience in the Solidarity Committee with changing his understanding of "what democratic participation looked like" and how he could participate now and in the future.

Juan's involvement in his university's Solidarity Committee began serendipitously. "I happened to fall into it," he explained. "I knew I wanted to be involved, but I didn't see myself getting involved with labor activism in the way that I did." Like many freshmen, Juan attended the fall club fair, where the group had a table. Juan recognized an older student he knew who was in the club. "So I just was like, 'Oh, he's in it? He's pretty chill. I'll check it out, I guess.' " At the first meeting of the club, he saw a couple of other people that he had met in the first few weeks of school. "I was like, 'Oh, these cool people are there? I guess I'll stay.' " As the group engaged in worker outreach, writing petitions, and staging creative actions to help improve working conditions for university laborers, Juan became hooked. "I loved the work that we were doing because I could see us getting tangible results."

Although Juan felt that his work with the Solidarity Committee propelled him to activism, because "personally, I'd never done anything like this before," he had engaged in direct action prior to college. He recalled that the first protest he ever attended was when he was "ten, eleven years old, and it was for immigration reform. And then, I was like, 'Now I'm grown up and can go to my own stuff.' The first one was a Black Lives Matter action" in his local city. During high school, he also participated in letter-writing campaigns and online activism. Despite his engagement in activism prior to college, he would not have considered himself an activist during high school. Nonetheless, Juan identified a number of experiences in high school that set him on the path toward activism.

Juan's turn toward activism began early, as he encountered racial

discrimination in school and class bias in the health-care system. He reflected, "My experience in school, like as a kid, and then more experiences in life in general with health care systems and the state apparatus, that definitely got me involved, got me more interested in doing something, more than just dealing with it." The grade school and high school Juan attended were "fairly white." As a Latino, Juan became keenly "aware of the racial issues, and so I definitely knew going into college I wanted do race work." At the same time, Juan also experienced economic insecurity during his childhood. He explained that his family lost their house during the Great Recession, and then his father passed away. Shortly thereafter, his mother became sick, and he struggled to find her the care she needed. His experience "dealing with state apparatus around that and seeing how it doesn't really work for poor people at all motivated me to work on that class component." When he came to college and saw the unfair treatment of low-income Latino, Black, and immigrant workers, he felt that working with these laborers would enable him to tackle issues of economic justice and racial justice simultaneously. "It's very much connected to race and class," he argued. "So I made that connection back in high school; it's just here [at college], it gave me a chance to actually organize around it." Juan's critical consciousness and his motivation to act grew throughout high school, but it was not until he entered college that he found the opportunity structure, through the Solidarity Committee, to claim the mantle of activist.

Juan argued that it is important to be "aware of the intersectional identities that exist, even within your activism." Part of this awareness for Juan included acknowledging how his own experiences with oppression as a low-income Latino had shaped his connection to the work of labor organizing, and another part of it meant recognizing the limits and responsibilities of his privilege as a college student attending a school that treated its students much more humanely than it did the workers who cook for them, serve them, and clean up after them. Juan's multiple identities impacted not only why but also how he engaged in activism. Working in solidarity with workers meant lifting up their concerns, giving them cover, and leveraging his privileged position as a stu-

dent to apply pressure to university decision makers. Asked to explain his motivation, Juan put it simply: "Because it's the right thing to do." He continued, "Why am I going to complain about how other people aren't doing it, when I have the ability and like the privilege to go do it. Because not everybody can. So why wouldn't I, if I can?" Certainly, Juan felt a moral responsibility as well as a personal connection to the work, but his sense of agency was also rooted in the knowledge that as a college student, he had less at stake when engaging in direct action and issuing demands than did the workers he was organizing, who risked losing their livelihoods.

Looking to his future, Juan planned a career as a community activist. He indicated a desire to become even more involved in labor organizing. He had already identified "really good organizations that organize around labor" outside the university with which he hoped to work. He imagined that he would begin taking up campaigns around affordable housing because "seeing how the intersections of working people and housing play into how we live" concerned him. Although he did not mention it explicitly, it seemed probable that his family's experience of losing their house during the recession factored into his desire to pursue this new strand. Juan may have become an activist in college, an identity he seems committed to carrying through to his professional life after college, but his turn toward activism began much earlier, as he dabbled in various forms of activism during high school, built an intersectional understanding of oppression, and developed the motivation to do something more than simply cope with injustice.

The stories of Blake, Sam, Priya, Paul, and Juan show how arbitrary a survey response to the question of when one became an activist can be. Put another way, their stories highlight the complexity inherent in the process of becoming an activist. Many of those who felt that they didn't become activists until college, like Blake, Paul, and Juan, spoke about earlier formative experiences that laid the groundwork for their activism. Prior to college, they were exposed to ideas and values or they experienced things that may have predisposed them toward activism, even when they did not expect or envision for themselves a future as

student activists. Others, like Priya, who felt that they became activists prior to college, looked back on their younger selves and recognized their behavior as consistent with activism and so justified affixing the label, even though they may or may not have seen themselves that way at the time. And still others, like Sam, came to college with activist identities already well formed but struggled to find a way to enact that identity right away. They had to find their place and their people before they could carry the activist thread through into their new environment. Regardless of the starting points they chose for their activist narratives, rarely was there a defining moment marking the sudden birth or adoption of an activist identity. This is not to say that there were not key moments that shaped students' trajectories as activists, as I discuss below and as Sam's reflections about the impact of the protests in Ferguson made clear, but by and large, the turn toward activism was gradual, complicated, and in many ways imperceptible at first. It was shaped by their identities and life experiences, by the institutions they navigated, and by the people they came into contact with, cared about, worked alongside, and learned from.

As they were turning toward activism, before they saw themselves as activists, each student experimented with forms of activism. Blake, Sam, and Juan participated in protests. Paul and Priya practiced "individual" or "low-key, in-person" forms of activism.

At the same time, each student engaged in learning, reflection, and analysis that would prove relevant to their later activism. Blake came to a deeper understanding of the tenets of speciesism in the animal ethics course. Sam's high school learning environment exposed him to activist language and tools that he would later use. Priya and Juan gained firsthand experience with discrimination and oppressive systems. Paul read widely and tried to initiate dialogue with those whose understandings deviated from his own. During their turn toward activism, all students acquired knowledge or skills that shaped their identities, commitments, and behaviors as activists. Though the pace of their turns toward activism varied from steady to halting and from slow to quick, all turns were marked by cognition and behavior, by social analysis and active experimentation with activism.

Paul is something of "an odd man out" in our data set with his passion for Second Amendment rights and his social analysis; nonetheless, his story of becoming an activist demonstrates that the turn toward activism is not unique to neoactivists. Like his neoactivist peers, Paul felt a moral imperative to act; he was motivated by compassion and concern for others as well as self-interest. Though starting his club did signal the beginning of an activist identity for him, it was clear that he had been engaged, both behaviorally and cognitively, in activism prior to his efforts to launch the club.

Where Paul diverges from the neoactivists is in his social analysis. In addition to arguing against gun control regulations, he expresses concern about whether governments should be able to set minimum wages for workers. He is skeptical of governmental interference in both individual self-determination and capitalistic structures. While there certainly are radical progressives who believe in loosening gun restrictions for vulnerable populations that are subject to state violence or racist, homophobic, or misogynistic attacks, Paul would not count himself among them, and he does not connect his Second Amendment advocacy to broader struggles for racial justice, women's rights, or LGBTQIA rights. In contrast to Paul's focus on individual rights and his aversion to any form of governmental infringement on those rights, the neoactivists advance a more interdependent framework, which emphasizes shared responsibilities and the struggle for collective liberation. Blake reflects on being "allergic to corporate activism." Their understanding of activism as "challenging, rather than accommodating, injustice" is rooted in a deep commitment to building power to challenge normative practices of violence through grassroots organizing. Similarly, Priya and Juan argue for the importance of forging critical solidarities across groups of marginalized people. Like Juan, Sam sees organizing as a tool to pressure institutions and governments to intervene in systems of oppression and to redistribute resources to address the needs of the vulnerable and protect public interests. Paul's case shows that it is the critical analytic frameworks attending to oppression and rejecting neoliberalism that distinguish non-neoactivists from neoactivists, not their pathways to activism.

Survey Data Corroboration for the Turn

Whether they completed their turn toward activism and adopted the activist identity in high school or in college, many respondents had engaged in some form of activism during high school; however, the extent and nature of the activism students practiced in high school differed from the activism they engaged in during college. Overall, the respondents' repertoires broadened from a mean of 2.22 forms of activism used in high school to a mean of 3.9 in college, and engagement in protests became more common, growing from 22% to 85% of respondents.

Comparing those who felt they became activists before college and those who said they became activists during college, I found few statistically significant differences. The two groups did not differ in terms of their demographic profiles, whether they felt there was a key moment that led to their activism, or how effective they felt their college activism had been. They did not differ with regard to the opportunities they had pursued in college, including forming an activist-oriented club, joining an activist-oriented club, taking a service-learning course, taking a community-based research course, or participating in student government. They also did not differ with respect to the number of causes they embraced or the range of activist tools they had deployed.[1] However, those who became activists in high school were significantly less likely than their counterparts to have participated in a sit-in during college and were more likely than their counterparts to engage in online activism in college.[2] Although this latter finding suggests that those who adopted the activist identity earlier may have pursued less risky forms of activism in college than those who adopted the activist identity later, it is important to remember that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups' participation in direct action, including protests and walkouts, creative actions, or lobbying and meeting with policy makers, all forms of activism that carry risk. Furthermore, online campaigns can carry significant risks, especially when activists attach their real names to their critiques, their demands, or digital footage of their engagement in direct action.[3]

With respect to their high school experiences, those who felt they became activists in high school were significantly more likely to have participated in direct actions, engaged in online campaigns, and attended meetings to lobby decision makers during high school than were their counterparts who became activists after high school.[4] Those who adopted the identity of activist prior to college engaged in more forms of activism in high school than those who adopted the identity in college.[5] These findings make sense and support the respondents' accounts of when they became activists. However, complicating the picture slightly, we found that high percentages of both groups reported that they had sent letters or postcards to policy makers during high school. Not only was the difference between the two groups of respondents not statistically significant, but well over half (58%) of those who said that they did not become activists until college reported that they had sent such letters during their high school years. This result indicates that many of them had been civically and politically engaged, at least by this one marker, before they came to college. Again, this finding supports the claims that the turn toward activism begins before the identity forms and before entering college for many college student activists. Moreover, the turn involves sociopolitical behavior or active experimentation with activism, and not simply thinking, talking, and learning about issues.

The Trump Effect

Although they had adopted identities as activists prior to Trump's election, many of our respondents cited his presidency as a seismic event that affected their motivation, analysis, and actions as activists, as well as the opportunity structures for activism available to them.[6] Some credited Trump with helping them move their activism from behind the scenes to the frontlines, as they became more willing to expose themselves to greater personal risk. Some described forging new critical solidarities in the wake of his executive orders, as their understanding of the oppressive forces that link different marginalized populations grew. A few discussed how Trump's ascendancy increased the urgency of for-

mulating and articulating a robust alternative to prevailing ideologies, like neoliberalism. Many pivoted from viewing their universities only as targets of their actions to also seeing them as central fronts in the new political resistance.

One activist who had been leading efforts to end campus sexual assault found that Trump's election caused her to broaden her focus to all types of antiviolence campaigns. She explained that even as she continued to work on sexual assault policy for her university, Trump's election caused her to channel more energy into addressing the immediate safety concerns of people on campus and around the country who were endangered by his rhetoric and actions. "I can see myself," she explained, "especially over the next year—really ramping up my involvement and maybe putting myself in spaces that are especially vulnerable and giving energy and money and time—all things that I think are really valuable and often overlooked." Trump's election prompted her to widen the scope of her activist work, both in strategy and in focus.

Another activist, Shira, described the emotional effect of Trump's ascendancy as simultaneously "frustrating" and "empowering." She explained that while part of her is exhausted and outraged that she still has to convince people "that women deserve equal pay and LGBT people should be considered human" in this day and age, another part of her is "more excited about being an activist" in the era of Trump. Shira noted that although all the causes she fought for during Obama's time in office were important, from "LGBT rights, to Black Lives Matter and the Flint water crisis, to the Dakota Access Pipeline, . . . they didn't feel as huge; they didn't feel as pressing; they didn't feel as unstable and insecure and just like in danger" as they did now under Trump. These feelings of imperilment motivated her, even as they weighed on her. Shira also observed that the "Trump presidency has had that effect of like unifying people, because at this point, we all realize that we're standing behind the same causes." Although Shira did not explain whom she meant by "we all," the sense of unity and common cause she described hinted at the neoactivist intersectional framework, which recognizes convergence among systems of oppression and calls for resistance in the form of critical solidarities across gendered, racialized, class-based, and geographic

lines. To this end, Shira took initiative and worked to forge connections with activists on other college campuses, recognizing their shared values and the importance of building power through numbers. In Shira's mind, Trump's presidency not only created the imperative but also opened up the spaces and opportunities for these connections to be made. As it did for many respondents in this study, Trump's election caused her activism to deepen and her identity as an activist to become even more central to her daily life.

Fusing Activist Identity Development and Sociopolitical Development

Although there is a rich literature on civic identity development and political identity development, activist identity development has received relatively little attention from theorists. Watts, Griffith, and Abdul-Adil's (1999) theory of sociopolitical development offers a useful starting point for exploring activist identity development because it proposes a stage theory of development that culminates with engagement in activism. In the final "liberatory stage," youth translate their growing critical awareness of the forces that maintain oppression and their growing sense of personal agency, achieved in the penultimate "critical stage," into action intended to bring about greater justice and equity. In this stage, "the person becomes an active agent in the transformation of his or her environment" (p. 263).

In addition to laying out a series of five developmental stages through which youth progress, sociopolitical development theory calls attention to four main constructs that are implicated in this developmental process, two of which are outcome variables (worldview/social analysis and social involvement), and two of which are moderating variables (agency and opportunity structure). As youth align their worldview and social analysis with their social involvement commitments and behavior, they develop an engaged activist "praxis" of action and reflection. According to the theory, it is in the liberatory stage that youth fuse their cognition with action.

Of course, engagement in activism and seeing oneself as an activist

are two different things, and thus far, sociopolitical development theory has not been used to explain how and when people come to claim identities as activists. It is possible that young people could develop a sophisticated, liberatory social analysis that informs their commitments and behaviors but not see themselves as activists. It is also conceivable that people could see themselves as activists and engage in activism that is aligned with their worldview and social analysis but lack the underlying critical consciousness that is so central to Watts et al.'s model. (With his limited attention to power dynamics, Paul may be one such case.) By viewing our data through the lens of sociopolitical development theory and its main constructs, we can determine which of its tenets hold for a diverse set of young people, and we can explore whether and how consideration of activist identity claims might be incorporated into this theoretical framework.

Perhaps because the stage theory of sociopolitical development emerged from a study of low-income African American youth, while our respondents are more diverse racially and socioeconomically, it does not fit all of the current study's data. Instead of progressing in a linear, cumulative fashion toward greater critical consciousness and then active involvement, the activists in this study described a gradual turn toward activism that involved equal parts cognition and action. As discussed earlier, this turn often began without any clear trigger, sometimes proceeded in fits and starts, and typically involved forays into activism even before deep commitments to causes were formed and robust critical consciousness of injustice or oppression had developed. Even students of color, like Priya and Juan, actively experimented with activism and made efforts to transform their environment well before their sense of critical consciousness—that is, their understanding of power asymmetries, injustice, oppression, and liberation—had matured. Recall, for example, Juan's reflections about how his motivation changed from wanting to "save" people in his community to wanting to help mobilize people to advocate for themselves. As Juan's understanding of oppression and democratic participation shifted in college, so too did his activist behaviors.

The central work of the turn toward activism is building a practice

in which one's behavior or engagement in activism not only reflects but also deepens one's social analysis and vice versa. This practice, in turn, serves as both a foundation and a scaffold for activist identity development. Those who embrace their identities as activists will certainly continue to refine and strengthen their activist practice, but without at least the rudiments of such practice established, any claims to an activist identity would be tenuous at best.

The presence of critical consciousness in this practice and in the turn toward activism distinguishes the neoactivists' developmental process from that of the non-neoactivists. Non-neoactivists may perceive and seek to redress social inequities, as Paul certainly did. They may recognize their own privileged identities, as Paul did as well. And they may engage in systemic thinking and root cause analysis, as Paul did when he attributed the causes of mass shootings to "poor mental health structures and access to them, cyclical poverty, abysmal educational and employment opportunities in many urban areas." But critical consciousness involves analyzing how power is used to create and maintain social inequities, how matrices of domination and oppression operate in invisible and interlocking ways to reproduce inequality. Because Paul eschewed these considerations in his defense of Second Amendment rights, his turn toward activism did not support the development of a neoactivist identity.

While elements of the stage theory of sociopolitical development did not comport with the respondents' turns toward activism, the theory's attention to how context and emotion shape the development of an activist praxis that links action and reflection helps bring into focus key aspects of the activist identity development processes and expose the underlying supporting conditions that enable student activists to claim and enact this identity. In the subsequent two chapters, I use this theory to elucidate the role of emotions in moderating the activists' praxis, to identify the core features of the opportunity structures that activists themselves highlight as instrumental to their development, and to further elucidate key differences between neoactivists' and non-neoactivists' developmental journeys into activism.

[THREE]

The Emotional and Relational Dimensions of Activism

Familial and Peer Influences

The dominant emotion Lizzie associates with her activism is fear. Growing up in a religious, low-income household in a southern state where children were taught to be seen but not heard, Lizzie was afraid to become involved in LGBTQIA activism because she was not yet out to some members of her family, including her step-mother. Instead, she campaigned for women's rights during high school because it felt less "controversial" than other causes that really called to her.

When she moved out of the state and away from her family for college, Lizzie felt liberated to fight for the things she truly believed in, ranging from queer rights and transgender rights to Black Lives Matter, the Fight for $15, and prevention of student homelessness and hunger, but activism still scared her. She recalled, "A lot of my fears were I was still kind of in that southern [state] mindset. . . . I think I was just scared because I had never done anything like that, like I had never gone to giant marches or called senators or done anything like that." She worried that her family would see footage of her protesting and that "they wouldn't support it and that my family would be like, 'You need to stop and that's not what you're going to college for!' " Although most of her siblings have proved to be "pretty supportive," she continues to hide her activism from her step-mother. Her father isn't "neces-

sarily against it. . . . His biggest concern is just making sure that I'm safe and that I'm okay."

Lizzie seems to have absorbed some of her father's concern, not for herself but for others. "The fear about my family has been replaced with the fear of my friends being attacked or harmed or arrested" as a result of their activism. She worries about their getting pepper sprayed at Black Lives Matter marches or targeted for harassment at LGBTQIA actions. She also worries about their feeling "invalidated" by messages coming out of the Trump administration. Ironically, even though Lizzie credits her friends with helping her overcome her own fears about participating in direct action, she is now more worried for her activist friends' well-being than she is for her own. In fact, that concern is part of the reason she has become so active in so many interconnected struggles: "Stepping onto campus and just meeting all of these people from all of these different walks of life and just seeing the things that they experienced and hearing their stories [helped me] realize what we're fighting for. Just having conversations, it really sparked something in me to be more active."

Not only did Lizzie's friends inspire her to become more involved in various movements in the first place, but they also helped sustain her deepening commitment to activism. "What transformed me [into an activist] was just that I was no longer alone in all of these fights, and not only that, but I now had a much bigger support system." Lizzie feels that activism is a "huge part of who I am and what I do," and she attributes much of her own development as an activist to the guidance and support of her fellow activist friends. Even though she continues to fear for marginalized populations and her friends with those identities, she knows that advocating for the full safety and well-being of underrepresented young people has become her calling, her life's work.

Facets of Lizzie's story are unique, but the broad contours are generally representative. Like many other neoactivists in this study, Lizzie's family members played a much less visible role in her activist identity development than did her friends. This finding may not be particularly surprising. For many decades, developmental theorists have viewed the

college years as a significant time of individuation and identity development for young people in large part because of the separation they experience from their home environment and the freedom and autonomy they enjoy in their new environment to take risks and try new things. The current generation of college students, however, has demonstrated an unprecedented facility for maintaining close contact with their parents while away at college, deploying cell phones and digital technologies for such purposes. This new trend raises the possibility that student activists communicate regularly with their parents about their activism. Do they indeed share their activist exploits with their parents? And if so, how do their parents respond? This chapter begins by exploring these questions, before examining the influence of the group of people who may be seen as replacing parents in the college environment—the peer group. Overall, this chapter continues to examine when, how, and why students turn toward activism, while focusing on the roles of family members and peers and the relational and emotional dimensions of activism.

Parental Influences on the Turn toward Activism

Exposure to Activism in the Home

Noting peaks in student activism during the 1930s, 1960s, and 1990s, Robert Rhoads (2000) has posited that surges of activism on college campuses may be the result of the offspring of former college activists making their way to higher education. Our data, however, offer only limited support for this contention. When asked if they had any older family members whom they would characterize as an activist, only 34% of the 237 survey respondents answered yes. Of those affirmative responses, the majority (53%) named their mother or step-mother as an activist, with the next highest percentages going to father or step-father (25%) and then sibling (23%). In open-ended sections on the survey, 30 respondents elaborated, naming such key influences as a grandmother who had participated in the 1963 March on Washington, a great grandmother who was friends with Malcolm X, a grandpa who was active during the Civil Rights movement and was once arrested, an uncle who

is gay and who participated in protests and riots in New York City during the AIDS epidemic, an aunt who protested against the Vietnam War while a college student at Duke, and a cousin who is "a very active activist" and posts regularly on social media. One respondent, whose activism focused on a wide range of social justice issues, mentioned that every member of her family is an activist of one sort or another; however, this respondent was an outlier in our sample with respect to such widespread familial involvement in activism.

A handful of respondents recalled being taken to protests or marches when they were younger, or growing up in a political household; however, they were also in the minority, and even in these cases the causal link was not always clear. For example, one interview respondent explained, "I remember being seven years old and being taken to LGBT fairness rallies by my parents, but they've definitely drifted away from it, and I personally got involved in [activism] on my own." A few respondents also explained that their mothers or other close family members had been activists, but that they had died before they could get to know them. A young woman whose mother passed away when she was two reflected, "I'd like to think she'd be proud of me." Another said of her deceased mother, "She participated in a lot of protests and marches and things in her day that my family tells me about now. My mom died when I was a week old, and so I've always just wanted to be like her I guess." By contrast, another respondent noted, "I've learned more recently that there's a history of activism in my family, but only a year after I got involved did I start to know that, so I can't really credit that [to my development as an activist]." Even though slightly more than one third of respondents did have a family member whom they would consider an activist, the influence of this family member on their own development as activists ranged widely from nonexistent to keenly felt.

Among those who did not have family members as activists, the absence of activism in their home lives was salient. One survey respondent wrote, "I'm from [a state where] activism is seen as futile at times. Because of this, I didn't really have any role models for activism." Another commented, "My development into activism has definitely been delayed by a lack of modeling during my upbringing. Don't get me wrong.

My parents are great people. They think critically about issues, are active in politics, and donate to charity. However, the idea of challenging the status quo in a more pointed way was not something that happened in my household. We never went to protests or marches or otherwise led lives outside of the American norm in order to endorse a more sustainable living model." Whether their parents were so "comfortable living in their own bubbles [that] they didn't partake in any advocacy efforts" or "so poor that the only thing we've been able to focus on is survival and love," the majority of our respondents (66%) did not grow up in a household in which they were exposed to activist work or encouraged to assume an identity as an activist.

Parents' Views of Their Child's Activism

Parents who were not themselves activists have different ways of responding to their children's turn toward activism. According to our respondents, some parents are critical, some are concerned, some express pride, some are indifferent, some feign interest, some are confused by their children's interests and actions, and some respond with muted or qualified support. And for some activists, different members of the nuclear family can offer each of these responses. One respondent, for example, described highly supportive siblings, an extremely critical grandfather, a worried mother, and a father who offered tempered support for her activist work.

A Lack of Support

Several respondents reflected on their family members' disregard for their activist work. One survey respondent volunteered, "My parents are actually very antiactivist. They think it's best if nobody makes waves." Another echoed, "Many of my close family members believe I should not be an activist and should not rabble rouse." An interview respondent commented, "My family is old-fashioned: stay in your lane, don't talk to anyone you don't have to. When I go out and protest and stuff like that, . . . [they are] constantly wishing that like I didn't necessarily go out and cause a fuss." Two white respondents described family rifts

that occurred over their involvement in Black Lives Matter protests, particularly when other family members were involved in police work. Often, however, the theme of disapproval overlapped with the theme of worry and parents' concern that their children will get in trouble or get hurt. In very few cases did parents disapprove of their child's activism work, according to their child, because it was seen as "a waste of time" or because "they still believe that I should just get my degree, find a well-paying job to support myself and my family, and then live a meaningful life."

Out of the 26% of interview respondents who described experiencing a complete lack of support for their activism from one or more family members, a disproportionate share identified as LGBTQIA (45% of queer respondents and 75% of those who do not subscribe to gender binaries).[1] This finding suggests that engagement in activism might bring additional burdens or costs for LGBTQIA students, who not only are at risk of experiencing violent reactions to their activism but also must contend with the fallout from family members' disapproval. Those activists who felt unsupported by one or more family members pointed in equal measure to family members' fear for their well-being and family members' different political viewpoints as the reasons behind their lack of support.

Of the respondents who felt that one or more family members did not sanction their activism owing to fear for their well-being, 90% identified as queer, and 40% identified as nonwhite. While it may be easier to hide one's queer identity than one's racialized identity as a Black or Brown person, activism for LGBTQIA causes can make those involved vulnerable to homophobic attacks. Family members of queer student activists may worry about this exposure, just as Black parents might fear their child will be subject to police violence if they engage in Black Lives Matter protests, and undocumented parents might fear their child will be targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) if they engage in actions related to immigrant and refugee rights. Such fears can translate to disapproval for their loved one's activism.

Although I did not find statistically significant differences by race in respondents' experiences of familial support or lack thereof for their

activism, the following comparison illustrates how race can factor into parents' responses to their child's activism. Both Casey and Shawn identify as upper-middle-class and do not subscribe to gender binaries. Casey is white, and Shawn identifies as brown. Both take up a wide range of activist causes, focusing on "the most marginalized," as Shawn puts it. Casey and Shawn similarly believe that their mothers do not support their activism because of concern for their safety, but this fear stems from different sources. Casey's mother, who "admitted very recently that she really didn't like that I was rocking the boat," fears that activism "will cause problems for me." Casey explains, "She has seen in the movies where people get driven off the road because they are rabble rousing, like they get seriously hurt. . . . I think she had some fear that I was going to have some sort of bad consequence, whether that was not getting a good job or making enough money, or real violence." Shawn's mother also worries about her child's risk of harm and "lack of security," but these fears are rooted in traumas she herself has experienced as an immigrant. Shawn observes, "She feels a lack of safety here that she has never felt in her life. So for her, like, the reason she tells me not to [engage in activism] is because she fears the same lack of safety for me." As concerned mothers, both discourage their child's involvement in activism, despite the fact that the one's fears are grounded in her own experiences of violence, while the other's fears are the byproducts of media accounts.

Mindful of the reactions family members might have to their activism, a number of activists mentioned that they avoided telling their parents or certain family members about their activist work. Their reasons for not sharing varied. Some wanted to spare their parents the worry. Others wanted to avoid conflict. As one said, "I never tell them when I protest because I know they'd be against it. I haven't told them that I'm planning to go to DC to protest the inauguration because they might be against it." Another reflected, "I'm more liberal than my dad is and he's just like . . . , so like I don't tell him as much. Just because . . . it's more so that we clash a little bit on our viewpoints sometimes, and argue." Others simply explained that they are not close to their families. One student shared, "While it's very central to my life and very central to

what I do and what I spend a lot of time on, I don't talk about it as much outside of activist spaces." Another respondent described leading a "double life." She explained that because she sees her family members only on holidays or special occasions, she kept her activism life separate from her family life. As I discuss later, for these activists who did not share as much with their families, peer support was particularly salient.

Types of Support

The majority of our interview respondents felt that they had at least one family member who supported their activist work, though as one noted, there are "different ways of being supported I guess." The three most prominent types of support interview participants described family members offering for their activism were "strong support," "reluctant support," and critical support." Strong support was described in unqualified terms. Usually, such strong support was attributed to siblings or to a mother: "My mom, who's like all in, [is] on the same page with what I am doing." Some respondents felt full support from their entire family or from a particular parent's side of the family. One described how her dad's side of the family loves what she is doing, and "they write funny messages to me on Facebook or on my birthday cards about, you know, various activist things that I'm involved in, or if they see something related to a cause I care about, they send it to me." She went on to explain how their "super supportive" response is "really nice, 'cause they recognize the value in having my own opinions and standing up for what I believe in." Such unequivocal support could help buttress against the more critical or equivocal support felt from other family members. Forty-two percent of the white students in our sample experienced such unconditional support compared to only 18% of the nonwhite students, which may be a reflection of the relative privilege white students enjoy as social movement actors. Of those who perceived strong support from a family member, one third had a family member who was an activist. The other two thirds felt strong support, though they might be the only person in their family to assume an activist identity.

Reluctant support was offered by parents or family members who worried about their children's well-being or who did not fully agree with

or understand the issues that were motivating their children to act, but who nonetheless respected their child's right to have opinions and act on them. One described his parents as "unthrilled" by his involvement. While he knew they would bail him out if he were ever arrested, he also knew that they did not love that he put himself at such risk through his direct actions. Another respondent said that his parents "tolerate it. They probably see it more as a hobby." This respondent felt disappointed that his mother, in particular, did not understand how important the work was to him. He recalled sharing with her a newspaper article about a protest in the quad in which he was involved, and his feelings of dismay when "she didn't seem to get it." Of his parents' reluctant support, a third respondent commented, "They don't really like that I do direct action, but . . . but they know that it's something that I enjoy and something that matters a lot to me, so they don't get in my way I guess." Similarly, another respondent reflected, "Even though she doesn't agree with a lot of my political opinions, she still supports my right to have them." Reluctant support was the most prevalent type of support activists indicated receiving from family members, felt by 47% of the interview respondents. The respondents who experienced this type of support included representative shares of both white and nonwhite students, and there were no statistically significant differences in the activists' experience of this type of support across various identity markers, including race, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexuality.

The most developmentally salient type of support respondents described receiving was critical support. When they experienced this type of support from family members, student activists felt valued, respected, and challenged to articulate and refine their positions. Twenty-two percent of the respondents reflected on the value of conversations they had about their activism with their parents or other family members about issues and tactics. For example, one respondent explained that her mother "doesn't always necessarily agree with like, the new ideas." She continued, "So she's always like talking about that with me, and it's actually really helpful to think through my ideas and why I'm supporting certain things, and the ways in which I'm supporting certain things. So she doesn't agree with me on everything, but that actually is more

helpful." Similarly, another activist explained, "I thought I had to figure things on my own in relation to activism," but when her father responded to some of her posts online with questions, "it helped me to understand" and "step back" to think through an issue or strategy more deeply. A particularly vivid example of critical support was offered by Carl, a middle-class Asian neoactivist who had adopted the identity of activist in high school:

> [During] my high school years when I was doing campaigning and things like that, they would ask me about it and support me and engage in conversations that were not always just, "Good job." They'd ask me why I did certain things and push me to build myself with that and so [they] pretty much treated me as an adult in a movement, rather than a kid who was just getting wide-eyed and excited. And they wouldn't just say, "Oh, you're just a kid who's excited." They would say things like, "Okay, you want to work on this campaign. What does that look like to you?" and really engage me. So I was pushed to work harder too, and not just say, "Yeah, I support something," but not take action.

Carl's parents helped him deepen his commitments and translate his values into action through their questions. They took him seriously and treated him with respect. The constructive nature of their critical support facilitated his sociopolitical development as an activist, helping him refine his worldview and social analysis while also assisting him in finding or creating opportunities for action and building his sense of agency.

Although the experience of critical support did not vary in any statistically significant way according to students' race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, or sexuality, those respondents who adopted their activist identity in high school were more likely to benefit from critical support than those who adopted the identity in college.[2] This result may reflect the fact that because most high school student activists live at home with their family, the family members of those who turned toward activism in high school had greater opportunities to seriously engage with them about their activist interests and behaviors than did the family members of those who turn toward activism in college.

Regardless of the type of support offered, parental or familial support was largely valued by those activists who experienced it, but it was certainly not a prerequisite to assuming an activist identity, and it did not appear to play a substantive role in most activists' turns toward activism. There was no relationship between whether they had a family member who was an activist and the kind of support the activists felt or did not feel. The lack of any statistically significant differences by race or class in the kinds of support perceived by activists suggests that parents of all races and classes vary in their responses to their child's activism. Although some respondents felt that their family members offered useful grist, by presenting a counterexample against which they could chafe or by engaging them in conversations that helped challenge and hone their perspectives, others saw their family members' reactions to their activism as simply something to manage as they continued to pursue the work that mattered to them.

In these ways our data depart from the findings of earlier studies, which documented strong alignment between parental attitudes and student activists' engagement. For example, in his study of students who participated in the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer and went on to play key roles in the Free Speech, Antiwar, and Women's Liberation movements of the mid-1960s, Doug McAdam (1988) found that the vast majority "credit[ed] their parents with being the models for their actions, . . . [a] finding [that] is consistent with most previous research on the roots of student activism" (p. 49). Ironically, despite the closer contact with their family members that new technologies afford college students, parental influence on students' turns toward activism appears to be considerably less pronounced today than it was in earlier eras of student activism.

Friendships and Peers' Influence on the Turn toward Activism

In college and in high school, peers played a significant role in students' development as activists; however, their influence did not always work in expected ways. For example, in response to the question "Did you attend your first event as an activist because a friend invited or asked

you to do so" only 37% of the survey respondents said yes. This finding also runs counter to much long-standing research that has shown that being explicitly asked to participate is one of the most powerful predictors of political behavior (Leighley, 1996; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993).

Rather than inspiring them to take initial action, peers tended to help student activists rethink or refine their worldview, deepen their sociopolitical commitments, and sustain the risky and emotionally difficult work of activism. Some friendships were tested by the turn toward activism, and while a few student activists found a way to maintain friendships with people who did not understand or support their activist work, others found they must leave certain friends behind as they deepened their involvement in the movements they joined. In this section, I explore the various ways in which student activists discussed the influence of their friends on their development and subsequent engagement as activists.

Friendships Affect Activism: The Role of Support

Activism is not a solitary activity; it requires solidarity. Relationships with fellow activists matter greatly. These relationships take on different characters, depending on the function they serve. Friendship, as discussed throughout this section, is the most common way in which activists characterize their relationships with their fellow activist peers. However, in the purely pragmatic sense, these relationships with other activists proved helpful in amassing collective knowledge, mobilizing large groups of people for actions, building power through numbers, and distributing the workload. For example, one interview participant highlighted the salience of "having a network that's also doing the work, so it's not just me." She continued, "I'm not the only one doing the work or showing up to events. At my school, there are a lot of people who are very involved in this, and I would say this really helps when there are tough situations or when the workload is really heavy. There are a lot of people to work with." Many activists discussed the power of knowing they were "not alone" in the struggle. In this way, activism helped relieve feelings of isolation and alienation.

It was common for the student activists in our sample to describe doing activism *with* their friends; however, close to one third explained that they did the work *for* their friends as well. For this latter group, which was predominantly white, their activism was typically born out of love for people, often their friends, who are experiencing oppression or injustice and to whom they feel a responsibility. For example, several survey respondents linked their motivation for activism to concern for their friends: "I have a lot of friends who are people of color, and so I'm very passionate about protecting them and helping to elevate their voices." Another survey respondent echoed, "Seeing my peers, friends, and loved ones oppressed by forces completely beyond my control lit a fire under me." A third explained that her activism grew out of her "desire to support my friends who are in even more marginalized communities."

Most of these respondents demonstrated a critical awareness of their whiteness, and the privilege and power it afforded them, and tried to position themselves as allies or accomplices to their friends of color, rather than as movement leaders. As one white, wealthy, queer, cis-gender woman explained, "I have especially participated in 'ally/accomplice'-based activism around whiteness/engaging white people." A Black student neoactivist, who declined to define her socioeconomic status or sexuality, emphasized the value of this kind of engagement, discussing her work on campus "creating allies for marginalized communities through dialogue" about white privilege. Though some of the new student activists betrayed glimmers of a white savior mentality, the white neoactivists worked to understand and confront their white privilege through their activism. As one neoactivist who was involved in a wide array of inward- and outward-facing causes put it, "As a white woman I feel a responsibility to fight white supremacy in whatever ways that I can."

Although nearly one third of the sample explained that their love for their friends fueled their activism, in most respondents' accounts of their individual turns toward activism, friends did not play a prominent role. In only a handful of cases did an interviewee describe first becoming involved at the urging of a friend or because they wanted to emulate a

friend. Nevertheless, friendship networks did have direct bearing on their continued involvement in activism. As one survey respondent wrote, "The influence of friends may not have been the catalyst, but it certainly influences how I've continued to engage." As they found new friends through their activism, the student activists described how their friendships shaped not only how but also why they remained engaged.

Activism is hard work; it is tiring, scary, and sometimes dispiriting, but friendships can mitigate these negative emotional experiences. In fact, when asked about the factors that sustain them in their activism, 68% of interview respondents mentioned their friends, and when asked what their friends think of their activism, two thirds of respondents used the words *support* or *supportive* in describing their friends. Support was a key theme in all interviews when peers and friends were discussed.

As with parents, support from friends took on different forms, but the main expressions of support included caring for the activist's well-being, challenging the activist to grow, and turning out for events that mattered to the activist. Typically, the respondents credited fellow activist friends with practicing the first two types of support and nonactivist friends with performing the third type.

Emotional Support

Several of the interview respondents described how their fellow activists' concern for the respondents' well-being mattered greatly to their overall health as well as to their ability and desire to carry on the work of activism. One interview respondent referred to this kind of care as "the emotional support aspect." Explaining what this support looks like in practice, another respondent said:

> A lot of my friends that are activists . . . we kind of all look out for each other, and so I'll look at some of my friends and be like, "Have you taken a deep breath today?" You know? "Just stand here with me for a minute and take a few deep breaths." They'll text me and be like, "Hey, I know you went to that march today. How are you feeling? I'm sure that that was really hard." So it's kind of cool just to see how much like people in the activism community really just have each other's backs.

Discussing the significance of this type of support, a third respondent detailed how the activism community "really validates each other, and just like sends each other loving emails. . . . And that makes me feel like my work is appreciated, which really sustains my energy." Simple gestures of care and concern were often deeply felt, and they represent a core element of the new student activism. As noted in the introduction, self-care and collective care are defining features of contemporary student activism. In the activist community, receiving care from others as well as expressing care for others constitute normative practices.

These acts of care that the student activists cited receiving from their friends are significant because activism often asks participants to be emotionally and physically vulnerable. One activist in our sample reflected that activism forced her to become "comfortable with being uncomfortable." Activism demands that participants take risks. Sometimes, these risks are linked to their involvement in direct action protests and demonstrations, and they involve physical threats; participants like Lizzie talked about their fears of the police showing up with pepper spray, of being arrested, of getting a target on their backs. Other times, these risks are psychological and transpire in more intimate activist settings, where participants are challenged to listen to one another's stories of pain, to share stories of pain, to confront their own complicity in oppression, or sometimes all three. When they tell their stories, activists may have to relive trauma associated with experiences of discrimination, harassment, or assault rooted in racism, sexism, misogyny, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia, or other systems of oppression. A prominent activist in the movement to end gender violence on college campuses, Alexandra Brodsky (2016) writes about how "frustrating and hurtful" it can be to be asked to tell survivor stories of victimhood over and over again (p. 259). For these reasons, attention to radical healing or healing justice work has become central in many activist spaces (Ginwright, 2010; Rosen, 2019; Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015). Julia Daniel and Michelle Renee Valladares (2016) describe how the activists in their study combine "an ancient trick" of collectively moving through trauma with the millennial strategy of "articulating intersectional understanding" to achieve healing justice (p. 215). As the

young Black women and gender-queer people in their study "collectively shared stories, built consciousness, and challenged one another and their organizations to address multiple forms of oppression," they worked to "collectively heal, become leaders, and transform the systems that marginalize them" (Daniel & Valladares, 2016, p. 215).

The idea of creating a "safe space" has been scorned by pundits on both the Left and the Right, and many have derided present-day student activists as "the snowflake generation," who are so delicate and fragile that they cannot withstand opinions that diverge from their own. However, a close look inside the work activists are doing with one another reveals this work to be deeply personal and exceedingly difficult. Sánchez Carmen and colleagues (2015) defend the role of "safe and brave spaces for community building," arguing that it is in these spaces that healing occurs (p. 842). For marginalized youth, healing from "the continual trauma of oppression" is as important a goal of sociopolitical development as action and solidarity (p. 840).

Because the issues they are grappling with are so personal and because the stakes are so high, activism circles can become charged and contested spaces. In a 2017 essay, scholar and committed activist Francis Lee asks to be "excommunicated" from the church of social justice because of the oppressive tendencies she observes within some activist communities. "Activists," she writes, "are some of the judgiest people I've ever met. . . . It is a terrible thing to be afraid of my own community members, and know they're probably just as afraid of me." She goes on to describe how activist spaces, if they are not carefully maintained as open and loving sites, can reproduce colonial logics (by which she means hierarchies of power), seek purity, insist on dogma and sacred texts, and even sanction punishment through shaming and "calling out" rituals.

Lee would probably be relieved to know that such experiences were not commonly described by our interview respondents. Rather, the few respondents who identified tensions or dysfunction within their activist communities discussed how their fellow activists responded to these issues by demonstrating emotional support for one another. One climate justice activist recalled how important it was to her to build "relationships of mutual support and mentorships with other women of color in

those spaces so that we can talk about the group dynamic," which sometimes caused them to feel marginalized or like their voices were not important factors in decision making. She discussed how the emotional labor that women and people of color would take on, like ordering food for a retreat or smoothing over arguments during meetings or even facilitating meetings, wouldn't be recognized because it wasn't work that was valued. "It was really helpful to be able to talk to people about that and like support each other through it, even though it was hard." Another activist highlighted the importance of balancing care about the issues with care for the people who are working on the issue within the activist space. To her, this meant enabling people to feel like "they can take a step back if they need to, ask others for help, or be honest about how they're feeling and just name what's happening in the space if they think it's unhealthy." She argued that the kind of open, responsive, and critical culture she and her peers had established in their activist community kept her "wanting to be in these spaces and keep doing this work."

Intellectual Support

A second type of support student activists described receiving from one another related to learning and helping one another to deepen and refine their worldview and social analysis. One respondent described this type of support as "healthily challenging you." She explained that it involves "helping you to grow and helping to support you through it." Another echoed, "My friends here [in college] have been supportive and engaged in a lot of political discourse. They ask my opinions and challenge me and help me rework my ideas. Overall, it's supportive and healthy, and they've helped me develop." A third explained that in the activism space, his friends and he "challenge each other and ask each other questions and support each other—that's been really helpful to have." The idea of being intellectually challenged by one's fellow activists surfaced in many interviews, especially as it related to strengthening their "understanding of social justice issues" and developing a critical consciousness or an awareness of how oppressive forces operate in society. This type of support resembles the critical support that some respondents indicated receiving from a parent. This finding is also con-

sistent with other research that shows how student activists learn by pushing one another's thinking and critical social analysis (Conner, 2014; Ollis, 2011; Rosen, 2019).

While several activists described how their peers challenged them to expand or complicate their worldview, others credited their fellow activists with helping them think critically about issues in the first place. Nine participants, with different racial and socioeconomic identities, discussed how conversations with peers and fellow activists helped them become more aware of pressing social issues, injustices, and the intersections among them. For example, a low-income Black woman, Rayvonne, discussed how as her friendship group shifted from high school to college, her sociopolitical understanding and interests grew:

> As opposed to high school where my friend group was a lot more diverse, when I went to college, I started going to all these diversity themed events, being a part of the Black Student Union, and hanging out with a lot more people who look like me. My friends back home, we really didn't talk about politics or issues that much. . . . When I came to college, you know, the climate is very different as compared to high school. So the conversations here are much more intellectual. People come from all types of walks of life: maybe politics is very important to them or maybe social issues are very, very important to them, or they are more aware of them. So I would say definitely my friends here in school have helped me a lot [to] . . . become more self-aware about the world. I've also reached out to them to have more conversations about these issues and figure out how to get more involved as well.

Another respondent, Daryl, a middle-class, white man, complained, "I hate it when people are like, 'I met friends that really exposed me to the world,' " before admitting, "but then meeting people that came from different backgrounds, and kind of understanding the privileges that I had . . . really changed my perception of what I want to do." He continued, "I had never really confronted these issues before. That's what has been so foundational for me in understanding these issues—not just reading that racism exists in textbooks, but hearing a Black friend be like, 'This is how I've encountered racism in my life.' Because I know

that when I share my personal experiences with homophobia, that's a lot more tangible and real and transformative than me telling people statistics and about LGBT suicide rate and stuff like that, even though that's obviously important to know and be aware of." For Daryl, hearing from friends about their experiences helped him make connections between racism and homophobia and forced him to recognize his own privilege as a white man, deepening his understanding of the circuits of oppression. Respondents like Daryl and Rayvonne credited their activist peers with awakening their critical consciousness and helping them find avenues for action or opportunity structures to translate their social analysis to societal involvement.

Many neoctivists described how they learned new skills and acquired new knowledge by watching more experienced activists, sometimes referred to as mentors. Some credited their mentors with creating opportunities for them to practice articulating their emergent analyses. This phenomenon resembles what sociocultural researchers have described as legitimate peripheral participation, wherein new members to a community are encouraged to listen, observe, and eventually try their hand at enacting the norms and signature practices of the group (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Over time, these participants move from the periphery to the center of the group as they gain confidence, assume more leadership responsibility, and make room for new members. Illustrating this trend, Rayvonne explained, "The conversations [my friends] were having were more intellectual, and I wanted to be a part of them, but I wasn't well versed in the things they were talking about, and so I'm not going to speak on something if I'm not educated on it. But I wanted to be part of the conversations, so it caused me to want to be more educated about issues and certain conversations, so I could insert myself and be a part of it and contribute something beautiful." The conversations her friends were having inspired her to read widely and study the issues so that she could participate meaningfully in the discussion and feel confident about her contributions to the activist community of practice.

Another respondent confessed that "the ideals of speaking your own voice didn't feel true to me for a while because I was speaking with the

voice I was learning, and going through a long process of unlearning some of the values I grew up with." At first, as a legitimate peripheral participant, he was motivated by a desire to impress people he admired socially in the activist world and to be accepted by them, but later, as he moved from the periphery to the center and began to feel truly empowered, he came to feel a genuine connection with other members of the community, which imbued his analyses with authenticity.

Similar to the respondent above, many interview participants described their activism as a learning process that was facilitated by their friends. As one said, "I always like to have some sort of project or place where I'm feeling really challenged, and activism and organizing has always been a space where I've never felt bored and I've never felt that I knew it all, or had figured it out. It's a continual learning process; it's a process where I can always make new friends, always make new relationships, continue to expand my understanding of social justice issues, so I think I'm drawn to that aspect of ongoing continual energy." While most respondents pursued this learning through a "series of conversations" with friends, some respondents read books or articles that their friends recommended to them. Some learned by following people on Twitter or reaching out to activist communities beyond the university and developing friendships with people online. As one interview participant put it, "Even social media has been really helpful in terms of challenging my ideas and figuring out what other people are thinking." The student activists' reflections on the nature and function of their peer support networks made clear that their friends provided not only emotional sustenance but also intellectual ballast, and in so doing contributed to their sociopolitical development by deepening their social analysis and strengthening their commitments to their activist pursuits.

Physical Support: Turning Up and Turning Out

A third type of support the friends of activists provided was physical and involved showing up for actions or events that were significant for the activist. A student activist who was deeply engaged in addressing issues of sexual violence on her campus recalled the importance of this type of support during her first visible activist action, when she emulated "what

Emma Sulkowicz at Columbia did" with her *Mattress Performance* by carrying a mattress around her campus and then ending up with it at a table in the quad:

> Having friends and having people that I never expected to show up carrying a pillow or wearing a red x or just coming up to the table and asking, "What are you doing" or "What is this for?" Having that show of support was really powerful, especially in a moment where I was still pretty young and pretty new to the movement. So, that's something that I very much remember. And there are definitely other times, maybe not [related to my] sexual violence work, but where I felt that people have shown up that I didn't expect to show up, and they've shown up in very intentional and positive ways.

The friends who, as another activist put it, "are the ones who come out to support" played an important role in sustaining the student activists' energy.

Activism Affects Friendships

Just as friends shaped the students' engagement in activism and their sociopolitical development as activists, so too did the activism shape the friendship groups. Many interview respondents described how their friendship circles had shifted as they have gravitated toward people who share their commitments and values and drifted away from others with whom they do not share those ideals. One described this process as "you find your people." In the process of finding their people, a handful of activists reported having lost friends. For some, these losses happened gradually: "Throughout undergrad, I slowly moved into more of an only activist friend group and had less things in common with my dorm friend group. As the years went on, I didn't really keep up with them." For others, these breaks were more dramatic. One activist, who said that her engagement in activism had adversely affected her mental health, explained "the reason that it has is because it has ended a lot of friendships. I guess they weren't—whatever, I don't want to get into it."

Only eight of 40 interview respondents indicated that all or most of

their friends now were fellow activists, while two times as many discussed navigating different groups of friends, including groups composed of nonactivists. For example, one respondent referred to "my friend circles that are mostly white, like swim club" in contrast to his more diverse activist friendship circles, and another mentioned her "friends in the music school that are not activists." Activists had various important reasons for maintaining ties with nonactivist friends.

For a handful of respondents, nonactivist friends provided a healthy distraction or break from the intensity of their activist work. A student involved in work to end sexual assault on college campuses reflected that caring for herself meant "having a support group of friends just to hang out with and talk about things that aren't activism . . . just to distance myself from everything." She continued, "Because while I care about [addressing the issue of sexual assault], it takes a lot of energy to care about, and so, people and a self-care routine are vital." Similarly, another respondent commented on the importance of "spending time with my friends, just kind of doing things that don't relate to it [activism] too. Like they'll ask me about [my activism], and I'll be like, 'Oh yeah! It's going great. You should really come out and do this event!' And they'll be like, 'Nah . . . .' [laughs] It's still a good time. They give me energy in a different way." For these respondents, friends outside the activism community helped counterbalance the taxing and often stressful work of activism, presenting a chance to step away, relax, and recharge.

Other respondents found maintaining friendships with nonactivists to be tricky; nonetheless, they persisted in tending to these relationships because either they hoped to educate and change their friends' minds or they saw that continuing to converse with friends who did not share their views could help them refine their own. One interview participant described her experience this way: "I have a couple of friends who are more conservative leaning, so the things that I like advocate for, they don't really understand, or it's an uncomfortable conversation with them . . . like they get uncomfortable. But I try not to let go of friends who disagree with me. Sometimes things just happen, or they just move so far right that they kind of stop caring about your opinion overall. But the friends who can still listen, and I can listen to them, we have

good conversations, and that does help motivate me." Another said that while having activist friends is important "because you feel like you can discuss everything with them and they'll like see your side, it's important more so to have [friends with] conflicting viewpoints, and like it helps you grow as a person."

Sometimes the activists' nonactivist friends actively disagreed with them, as in the cases before, but at other times, these friends simply did not appear to have the time or desire to engage. The respondents felt that these friends tolerated their activism without deeply understanding it or taking steps to actively support it, and the activists seemed to accept without judgment their friends' apathy or indifference to the issues that concerned them. While a handful described persisting in trying to educate and challenge and even inspire their friends, an equal share described just letting them be. For example, one respondent commented, "My friends are just kind of like, 'Oh, that's great! I wish I could do that.' And I'm like, 'You can!' But they're like, 'Uh, no. I think I'm ok.' So they leave it up to me to do that type of [activism] stuff, so I mean I'm ok with it." Even though they have made different choices than their friends about their priorities while in college, most student activists did not blame their friends for putting schoolwork or their acapella groups first and for saying they are "too busy with other things" to engage in activism, especially when they felt their friends were still "generally supportive" or "passively supportive" of their involvement in activism. Even this passive support mattered.

The Emotional Dimension of Activism

Why does the support of friends matter so greatly to activists' identity development and work as activists? One simple answer is that emotional labor demands emotional support, and activism is intensely emotional. As one activist said of her activism, "It's mentally exhausting because some people share heartfelt stories, some people cry, some people are very angry or like not open to sharing, and it's just like a whirlwind of emotions." Hearing a peer's stories of experiences with discrimination and oppression can be painful. Sharing one's own story can risk

retraumatization. Unlearning "some of the values I grew up with" and confronting one's privilege can be unsettling. Participating in direct action can be scary, as it involves the potential of arrest or bodily harm or, as Lizzie put it, "the fear of being attacked." Fighting for a cause against a seemingly intractable or unresponsive administration can be disheartening. Given all the unpleasant emotions associated with activism—fear, discomfort, hurt, burnout, and exhaustion—why do activists keep driving on?

Over and over again, the answer circled back to friends: they did it *for* and *with* their friends and the people they loved. When conversations became painful, friends comforted each other. As Lizzie explained, during conversations about the "different issues that people of color were facing, that trans women were facing . . . we just kind of held onto each other." When she felt scared about her first "huge" direct action, she found "having friends there with me definitely was really helpful." When burnout set in, friends encouraged and inspired each other to keep working. As another activist recalled, "Even if it's rough, and you just feel burned out, I tell people the same thing: 'I know you feel tired and I know it feels like things won't be changing any time soon, but like, just keep going . . . you'll make a change, and you will affect something.' " Yet another activist echoed, "There are certainly moments where I'm like, 'Well, this isn't doing anything. Why bother?' And so in moments like that, definitely having the group is really important because they're people who are older than me, people who have been through it before who are like, 'This will pass. Trust us. Let's just keep working.' So it's definitely good." This type of encouragement, coupled with the knowledge that "people in the activism community really just have each other's backs," made many activists feel an even deeper sense of commitment to the causes, the work, and the people with whom they were organizing. It kept them energized and motivated.

Emotional Experiences

Student activists reported a wide range of individual emotional experiences linked to their activism, including anger, sadness, and even despair,

vulnerability, exhaustion, and burnout as well as empowerment, exhilaration, hope, joy, gratitude, and love. Every interview respondent described contradictory emotional experiences at different points, and survey respondents reported many competing emotional experiences as well. One respondent referred to activism as an emotional roller coaster. Although frustration was the emotion that was most commonly reported by the survey respondents (experienced by 81% of respondents), it was followed closely by feelings of hope, love, and connectedness. Feelings of anger and fear trailed behind these more positive emotions. Fear, the least common emotion the respondents flagged, was still experienced by a majority of respondents (57%). Other emotions survey respondents described struck a balance between negative (hopeless, hurt, shock, sadness) and positive (unity, inspiration, fulfillment, and empowerment). Emotions were triggered when new institutional or governmental decisions were made or when developments transpired on their campuses or in society that seemed to demand a response; when they were holding meetings, planning events, or staging direct actions; and as their activist demands were variously accepted, dismissed, or negotiated by those in power.

In addition to arising in the course of their activism, emotions served as key impetuses to initial action for respondents. One survey respondent reflected on how his emotions evolved as he became more deeply involved in a campaign for racial justice: "My activism at first came from a place of rage, and later from a place of love." An interview respondent described the emotional dimension of his journey into activism this way: "Having seen loved ones and friends and mentors be personally affected by a lot of oppression and injustice that happen every day, I think just emotionally, I was angry and upset, and felt a little bit helpless at times. But I saw activism as an outlet to really channel that energy into something where I could see tangible results from my efforts, from the efforts of other people. It's something that's exciting and tiring." While feeling angry, frustrated, or fed-up served as powerful emotional catalysts to activism, noted as motivating emotions by 73% of the respondents, even larger shares of respondents indicated more optimistic or hopeful emotions that moved them to action, includ-

ing a desire to improve society (90%) and a desire to support others (81%). There were no statistically significant differences by race or class in respondents' experiences of negative motivating emotions; however, more white students than expected and fewer students of color than expected were motivated by a desire to improve society or support others.[3] It may be that because students of color were engaged in activism as much for themselves as for others, the desire to "support others" and improve an abstract "society" through their activism was not as salient a motivator for them as it was for white students. The students did not differ by race in their desires to effect institutional change, which was a motivating goal for 72% of the sample.

Managing Emotions: Self-Care and Collective Care

Given how demanding activist work is with respect to both time and emotional investments, activists recognize the importance of developing their capacity to channel pain into healing and action, practicing self-care and collective care. Sixty-four percent of the interview respondents described various physical and psychological techniques they had developed to ensure that they were able to manage the emotions that their activism surfaced and to continue their activist work. These techniques included "compartmentalizing," "meditating," and "defining my own boundaries." They ranged from "taking a moment to breathe" to "taking a couple of months off" from activist work. Several activists spoke about the importance of finding outlets for the emotions their activism elicited. One mentioned how "therapeutic" she found running to be; another explained that if she didn't make time to write and draw, she would "go bonkers."

Although one third of the respondents appreciated and availed themselves of counseling services on campus, many more described how they had learned to practice self-care. Explaining why self-care was so important, one neoactivist said, "It's incredibly emotionally demanding of an issue, when people tell stories and things like that. . . . I can't do my school or work with other students on campus concerning violence if I am physically unwell. I can't talk to people about their stories if I'm not

emotionally able to hear them. So it's having a responsibility [to take care of myself]." Another respondent similarly felt that her involvement in activism had "definitely highlighted the need for self-care, because there is a lot of burnout in the activist community, and it is really tiring." Describing her self-care regimen, a third neoactivist reflected, "Sometimes when I just need to not be talking to people, I'll go to that beach [that has no cell phone service] and just kind of sit and listen to the waves and meditate and ground myself, and then when I feel better, I'll go home."

Self-care, or "unapologetic me-time," took many forms: making time for themselves to reflect, indulging in hobbies or other "mindless distractions," and giving themselves permission to do silly and fun things with friends. For a couple of activists, it also included learning to say no: "Another way of practicing self-care this year, is just by saying, 'You know, I can't handle this right now. I have too much on my plate right now. I would love to help you, but it's just not possible right now.' So just practicing saying 'no' has also been something that I've been practicing with self-care." One respondent explained how he had learned to frame his denials in terms of his capacity: "It helps using the word *capacity*; it just feels like, more influential than being like, 'I'm too busy,' and it feels like that's an organizing term—capacity." Whether they were trying to stave off burnout, "maintain sanity," or assuage feelings of "activist guilt," self-care habits were vital. Of course, making the language of self-care normative in an activist space was another important strategy activists developed to rationalize spending time on other activities and prioritizing their own well-being.

A distinguishing feature of neoactivists is that they are more collectively than individually focused. Collective care was as prominent a theme among the neoactivists as self-care, and the intentional practice of tending to one another's emotional needs in the context of the activist community paralleled the neoactivists' expression of care and concern for the broader community. They made space to address and try to resolve tensions or disagreements in the group. They took the time to send one another "loving emails" and to text each other reminders to breathe.

In addition to offering expressions of love and support to one an-

other, the neoactivists carved out time to have fun together. One respondent shared:

> I sort of had a party at our last meeting. I made it seem like a regular meeting. So they came, and we had a dance party, and I gave out paper plate awards. It was dumb and you know, whatever, but I wanted them to know that I know that the club is a lot of work and it's exhausting at times because it's such a hard conversation and we're getting so injected to it, and so I wanted them to know that I appreciated them and that they had helped me in so many ways. . . . And they ended up having fun, and one of the seniors in the group came up to me at the end and said that joining this club was the most important thing they'd done all year and they really appreciated it.

Efforts to counterbalance the more strenuous and emotionally taxing aspects of activism with fun, such as group bonding activities, were described by several respondents. One activist commented, "The work can get exhausting and demoralizing at times, so we actively plan, like, 'Okay! We're going to have a party tonight. Everybody just show up and let's just have a good time.' " Other respondents described organizing a "de-stress paint night," "a goddess party," and a "bowling event" to help buoy the spirits and promote the well-being of their fellow activists. By looking out for each other's socioemotional health, peers helped sustain one another's activist identities and engagement.

This chapter focused on the relational and emotional dimensions of activism. It makes the case that activism can be emotionally demanding work, but that friends play a key role in buffering the activists from burnout and despair. More than three fourths of the interview respondents named peers as a key support. They derived a powerful sense of belonging from their activist communities.

The role of friends is especially pronounced, given the limited influence of parents. Developmental theorists have long observed that a key task of adolescence is individuation, which often involves replacing the family with the peer group. This process becomes heightened during college, when many students live and eat with their peers instead of their

family members. In fact, it is not surprising that many neoactivists in this study referred to their activist friends as family. College, therefore, provides a salient opportunity structure for students to develop deep and sustained relationships with peers, based on common values, commitments, and identities.

Our data show how peers support one another's sociopolitical development by impacting each of the factors in Watts and Flanagan's (2007) model of sociopolitical development: worldview and social analysis, societal involvement, agency, and opportunity structure. By providing intellectual support, peers in an activist community help each other acquire the language and critical lenses of activism. As they learn to articulate shared values, they formulate a common worldview and critical social analysis. As they collaboratively plan and execute actions in line with this worldview, confident that each act of engagement can make a difference, they fuel one another's sense of agency. Through such joint practice, they translate their values and understandings into societal involvement behavior.

The primary function of peers for activists, however, is to care for one another, providing emotional support and a sense of belonging. A core element of the opportunity structure that higher education affords students through activist-oriented student groups and clubs is a sense of membership in a peer group that takes seriously the work of effectuating not only social change but also one another's sociopolitical development in the course of that work within a safe and loving, but challenging, space. (Chapter 5 expands on the finding that a central task of activist work is educating and supporting the growth of others, both within and beyond activist circles.) Of course, peers are not the only people in the higher education environment interested in encouraging students' growth and shaping their development. The next chapter examines the contributions of professors, staff, and administrators, as well as peers, to students' turns toward activism.

[FOUR]

The Intellectual Dimension of Activism

Educational Influences

When she gave her impassioned speech at the rally following the Valentine's Day 2018 massacre at her school in Parkland, Florida, Emma González brandished her Advanced Placement (AP) government class notes. She held them above her head in a preemptive strike against the critics who would say that youth do not understand enough about politics to join the debate about gun control. When she took the stage at the CNN-sponsored town hall to face off against the National Rifle Association spokesperson, she began by thanking her AP government teacher, Jeff Foster, "for teaching us everything we learned. I could not have written that speech without you." And on the *Ellen DeGeneres Show* the next day, she expressed the gratitude she and her classmates felt to "have been in a school that educated us almost perfectly to handle this situation."

Emma González was not the only March for Our Lives student leader to acknowledge her teachers. Other student activists called out specific teachers and opportunities they had at Marjory Stoneman Douglas (MSD) High School that they felt prepared them to take the lead in a national conversation about gun reform. Jacyln Corin, who wrote a 50-page term paper on gun control for her AP composition and rhetoric class prior to the shooting, explained in one radio interview, "Our public school system in South Florida has prepared us amazingly for this.

We've had amazing teachers all our lives." At a time when civics education has become a low priority in America's schools, and commentators have lamented weak student outcomes on national civics assessments,[1] the rise of the MSD student activists highlights valuable lessons about how schools can foster students' civic learning, civic engagement, and political leadership.

There are many aspects of MSD that made it fertile ground for a national movement to take root. These factors include its demographics, teacher profile, curriculum, and rich array of extracurricular opportunities.[2] It is also notable that the state of Florida passed legislation in 2010 mandating a civics requirement for middle school students. The MSD juniors and seniors who emerged as leaders in the March for Our Lives movement would have been among the first cohorts of students to experience this requirement.[3] MSD shows that schools can cultivate students' activism, building up their civic and political knowledge, skills, and sense of agency. But we know that not all high schools can afford their students the kinds of opportunities MSD and the Florida education system provided.[4] Can student activists develop in the absence of these opportunities?

We also know that the cultural milieu and local political context in which the school is situated matters, rendering it much harder for students in locations like Santa Fe, Texas, and Gillette, Wyoming, to engage in radical political activism. In these settings, the few student activists who have emerged have met considerable resistance to their efforts to mobilize their communities around commonsense gun reform (Greene, 2018; Saslow, 2018). Given the reality of broader social constraints, which school-based opportunities appear to have the greatest impact on a student's sociopolitical development?

The rise of the March for Our Lives movement and the worldwide Climate Strikes, which Swedish 15-year-old Greta Thunberg helped launch in 2018, are the latest reminders that throughout history, high school–aged youth have been deeply involved in social movements, including the Civil Rights movement, the anti–Vietnam War protests, and the Chicano blowouts of 1968 (Barrett, 2015; Franklin, 2003; Graham, 2006). Today, many young people are becoming engaged in social ac-

tivism prior to college. Our data reveal that 42% of college student activists became activists before they entered college.[5] What role, if any, did their academic and extracurricular experiences play in their turns toward activism? What educational opportunity structures helped them not only to develop critical consciousness and a sense of agency but also to translate their social analysis into social action? This chapter continues to explore when, how, and why students become activists, focusing on the high school and college experiences of those students who already identified as student activists at the time of the tragic February 14, 2018, mass school shooting in Parkland.

High School Experiences

Most of the research that considers how high schools can prepare students for citizenship focuses on civics education, though some work also considers the role that extracurricular programs, particularly student government, can play in building students' civic skills and dispositions (Baldi, Perie, Skidmore, Greenberg, & Hanh, 2001; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; McFarland & Starmanns, 2009; McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Wray-Lake, Shubert, Lin, & Starr, 2017). A large body of research has also grown around service-learning and its role in engendering civic-mindedness. In fact, service learning is one of six "proven practices" for civics education that have garnered consensus among scholars and leaders in the field of civic learning (Gould, Jamieson, Levine, McConnell, & Smith, 2011). Of course, many scholars are quick to point out that quality matters more than mere exposure, and so it is only high-quality civics classes, high-quality service-learning experiences, and high-quality extracurricular programs that make a difference to students' civic outcomes.

The results from our study are consistent with this research insofar as they turn up mixed results about the impact of civics education, extracurricular participation, and service learning of unspecified quality on student activists' development. The student activists we studied were not consistently any more or less exposed to these opportunities than their peers, based on national norms. Furthermore, statistical analyses

revealed no relationship between whether they had benefited from civics and service-learning opportunities and either when they began to see themselves as activists or how effective they felt their activist campaigns and efforts had been.

Civic Education and Service-Learning

A recent study found that civics requirements for high school graduation vary widely across states, but there is an overall lack of "sufficient and comprehensive civic education" nationally (Shapiro & Brown, 2018). Only nine states require a full-year civics course in high school, while 30 states require a half-year course. None of the states includes "experiential learning or local problem-solving components" in its civics curricula; however, 25 states allow service-learning to count for high school credit, and one state, Maryland, requires both service-learning and a civics course for graduation.

The data from our study paint an even less rosy picture with regard to access to civic education and service-learning than the national portrait might suggest, highlighting the paucity of school-based opportunities for civic learning and community engagement. Fifty percent of the college student activists in this study reported that they took a civics course in high school, and of those, 21% said their course involved some sort of experiential component that involved them in "taking action." While 78% of the states require some type of civics education in high school, our study found that only 50% of student activists experienced such coursework. Similarly, fewer students in our study than expected encountered opportunities for service-learning. Slightly more than one third (34%) of the study participants experienced service-learning in high school. For the most part, participants found these service-learning experiences to be positive, with 60% indicating that this activity was somewhat or very empowering. However, neither civics courses nor service-learning experiences in high school bore any significant relationship to when students became activists or how effective they felt their college activism was.

Contrary to much extant research, our data did not turn up statisti-

cally significant differences in exposure to civics by race or class; yet we did find disparities in exposure to service-learning classes.[6] Thirteen percent more white students than their nonwhite peers reported having a service-learning class. Similarly, although the difference was not statistically significant, 12% more affluent students reported having had a service-learning class than their low-income peers.

When asked in interviews about how their high school experiences might have influenced their development as activists, some respondents drew attention to key academic experiences or pedagogical techniques teachers had used. No one mentioned service-learning experiences, though AP US government and politics classes and US history classes did come up in a few interviews. These respondents highlighted debates, discussion of current events and controversial issues, and opportunities to write personal position papers or reflection essays as influential. For example, one respondent described a government teacher who liked "to get us angsty. . . . So every Friday we would have a debate. He would bring up controversial issues and then be like, 'Okay, have fun! Talk about it.' And that would be interesting, and I think that's where I realized I can't stay quiet when I believe somebody or anyone is feeling even the slightest bit of injustice." Another respondent described his government teacher as someone who liked to "play devil's advocate" and helped them understand the various arguments on either side of an issue. He credited this pedagogical technique with laying the foundation for his developing critical consciousness.

Although debates and discussions of controversial topics were formative experiences for some respondents, teachers should orchestrate such opportunities for learning with care and sensitivity to students' identities and unique circumstances. It can be painful for a Black student to debate Black Lives Matter, for a gay student to debate gay marriage, or for a student who has been sexually assaulted to debate whether the Me Too Movement has gone too far. A student whose parent or sibling is struggling with addiction might have suffered during a debate over "the ethics of public health government-based programs for drug addiction and whether or not those were a good option or should just jails and prisons be the course of institutional choice." One respondent who re-

called such a debate remembered the difficulty of hearing classmates "saying that they were just junkies who deserve [to be incarcerated]." Whether the issues debated are abstract or deeply personal can affect the emotional tenor and utility of the learning experience.

In addition to pedagogy, the curricular content or subject matter surfaced in several respondents' accounts of their journeys as activists. For example, a seventh-grade Holocaust unit in an English class had a profound influence on one young neoactivist, who recalled that "the concept of bystanders really struck a chord with me." He reflected, "When you look around at the world, you could be a bystander in America and not be a part of the conversation that could affect people's lives or you could be involved. . . . I don't want to be the person who's stuck in a crisis, and other people can help you but won't, because they just don't care enough or they're not willing to sacrifice. And I think that's really a lot about what activism really is." As he continues his activism, he explained that he draws on the lessons he learned as a seventh grader about the moral imperative to become involved.

For another respondent, the significance of what she had learned in high school about social movements did not occur to her until later, when she was in college and made a connection between these historical student movements and the Mizzou protests.

> We learned about the college students and SNCC of the south and things like that—like how college students throughout history have led the charge of the social movement, whether that be the Vietnam protests or the civil rights protest in the 1960s. And I always read about it in textbooks, and I didn't really think that much about it. But like seeing Missouri. . . . That was such a huge story, and it was so important, and I was in college. Those were not my direct peers, but like people my age doing something as big as taking on a university president and creating national news. That was like "Wow! That happened! That can happen, and that is happening, while I'm at school." So it was more personal at that point, and I think that the connection was finally made that this is when it happens, that the next generation can transform stuff, and recognizing that I was in that position.

While the connection to contemporaneous student activists at Mizzou may have felt more "personal" than any connection to student activists of the past, the understanding she had developed in high school that student activists have historically played key roles in transforming society helped bolster her sense of agency and desire to take action on her own campus.

For one respondent, the opportunity to direct her own learning in high school, to choose the content and scope of a project, made a difference to her sociopolitical development. She recalled that it was a senior year capstone project that launched her foray into activism. For her project, she decided to tackle rape culture at her school:

> It started because we were so mad at these like privileged boys at our school who thought they could get away with saying anything, doing anything, whatever they wanted. We were like, "Fuck that! We're going to take a stand and we're going to stir some shit up at school." And we were like, "We're going to do this! We're in high school, and we're going to make a lot of people mad, and we're going to do it." The project turned out really well. You know, it was great. It's still something that I'm super proud of.

She believed that because of this project, she was prepared to pursue a women's studies major in college and become involved in sexual assault prevention work on her college campus. She credited this experience with setting her on an activist path. Although there were few consistent themes in respondents' discussions of their high school experiences as influential in either the start or evolution of their activism, the examples discussed before speak to the potential power of certain opportunities, pedagogical moves, and curricular content to spark students' political engagement.

Extracurricular Clubs

Unlike exposure to civics classes and service-learning, participation in activist-oriented extracurricular clubs did appear to impact when students became activists, though it did not have any bearing on how ef-

fective they felt their later college activism was. Forty-five percent of the respondents were involved in an activist-oriented club, group, organization, or extracurricular program during high school, and those who were involved in such clubs were more likely to indicate becoming an activist in high school than those who were not involved.[7] The majority of these clubs were school based rather than community based; however, a higher share of students who became activists in high school (36%) reported experiences with a mix of school- and community-based activist-oriented clubs in high school than did those who became activists in college (19%).

Survey respondents cited a wide array of clubs. The most frequently named clubs included gay-straight alliances (GSA) or LGBTQ clubs; diversity or multicultural clubs; feminist clubs; environmental clubs; and service or volunteer-oriented groups, such as Key Club, National Honor Society, and Interact. Student council or student government was mentioned by a handful of respondents; however, involvement in student government was not statistically related to the timing of activist identity formation. A couple of students cited faith-based groups, such as a right-to-life club, and a couple named national organizations such as Amnesty International or STAND (Students Taking Action Now for Darfur). One student named Invisible Children, along with a couple of other school-based groups in which she had been involved.

The roles these clubs played in the participants' stories of how they became activists ranged widely. For some respondents, particularly those who felt they became activists in high school, the club was the place where their activist identity became activated. One student, who went on in college to become active in efforts to end gender-based violence on campus, recalled starting a club with her friends to help unionize the school's cafeteria and facility workers. Another respondent, who became deeply involved in climate justice efforts in higher education, traced her activist roots to a "Young Feminists, Young Equalists" club, in which she and her peers "discussed a wide range of intersectional feminist issues. We participated in dialogue with the school administration as they were rewriting the dress code."

For other students, the club planted seeds that did not sprout until

they entered college, when they deepened their involvement in the causes that had appealed to them in high school. Several students looked back on volunteer work they had done in high school as formative. One reflected, "At the time, I don't think I thought much of it. I think I kind of thought it was silly, but in hindsight that could have easily had an impact" on her development as an activist. Of their involvement in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in high school, another respondent shared, "I was a casual member of this three-person club that mainly talked about things I didn't yet understand." It was in college that this respondent became "immersed in the world of radical, left-wing activism" and came to understand a democratic society as one in which "my own liberation, autonomy, and self-fulfillment is tied up in the liberation, autonomy, and self-fulfillment of others." Although the "activist social circles" encountered in college and an activist friend "who actively challenged my perceptions of the world" helped this respondent to develop a robust critical consciousness, it seems likely that their membership in SDS and GSA in high school helped stimulate the germination process.

For other respondents, merely the existence of a particular club on their high school campus mattered, even though they were not involved in it. For example, for one young man who was reluctant to come out as gay in high school, the very presence of a GSA at his high school was significant: "I was very nervous about being associated with anything gay, but like from afar, I was supporting it, because I was like, 'This is so cool.' " Years later, in college, when he did come out, he remembered having been inspired by his peers' efforts to fight to save the GSA when it was at risk of being cut from the school's extracurricular roster due to budget constraints.

Overall, student activists tended to feel that their activism in high school, if it existed, was less risky or less intense than their activism in college. As one respondent put it, "I would say my involvement in high school was safer. Like the environmental club, we did recycling activities or documentary screenings. The peace club, we did food drives and a couple demonstrations." For the most part, high school clubs, afterschool programs, and extracurricular opportunities gave student neo-

activists a chance to learn about social justice issues, to practice leadership and peer education, and to dip their toes into political streams or social activist waters. Even those who felt they became activists in high school, like Yeej, described how their activism deepened and intensified in college.

Student Voice and Influential Texts

From a statistical standpoint, only two other school-level variables held any relationship to when students adopted their identities as activists: reading a text during high school that shaped their identity as an activist and experiencing a high degree of student voice at the classroom level (table 4.1).

Respondents who reported that they read a text during high school that shaped their identity as an activist were more likely to claim an activist identity before entering college than after entering.[8] Respondents were only slightly more likely to have read such a text than they were to have participated in an activist-oriented extracurricular program during high school. Forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they had read such an influential text during their high school years, and nearly one quarter (23%) of them reported that they read the text(s) on their own, independently, and not for a school assignment. Most typically, the student activists encountered the text as required reading in their high school English or literature courses (58%). Only four students read the influential text for a civics or government course. There was little overlap in the titles and authors the students identified. Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* was identified by six respondents; Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* were both named by five respondents; Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* were each singled out by four respondents; and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* was named by three. Other texts named by students included Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Frederick Douglass's *The Heroic Slave*, and works by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,

Table 4.1. When Students Became Activists by High School Experiences and Opportunities

	Became an Activist before College ($N = 95$)	Became an Activist during College ($N = 134$)	Overall ($N = 224–233$)
Civics course			
Yes	42%	48%	50%
No	48%	52%	50%
Service-learning			
Yes	39%	32%	35%
No	61%	68%	65%
Activist club***			
Yes	64%	32%	45%
No	36%	68%	55%
Student government			
Yes	28%	22%	24%
No	72%	78%	76%
Number of activist clubs in high school	1.92 (1.06)	1.52 (.74)	1.75 (.96)
Text**			
Yes	57%	40%	47%
No	43%	60%	53%
Number of high school teachers who gave student a voice in class*	3.81 (1.29)	3.42 (1.23)	3.58 (1.27)

Note. * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Michel Foucault, Angela Davis, Michael Pollan, Malcolm X, Wangari Maathai, and Aristotle.

Like service-learning, student voice is considered one of the six "proven practices" that foster civic learning (Gould et al., 2011). As Peter Levine and Kai Kawashima-Ginsberg (2017) explain, "Young people develop into more effective, skilled, and knowledgeable citizens when they feel that students influence the climate and policies of their schools and that all students' voices are respected and valued" (p. 4). In our sample of activists, nearly half (49%) indicated that few, if any, of their teachers gave them a voice in their high school classrooms, but close to one third (31%) felt that they had a voice in most or all of their classes. The more of their teachers they felt gave them a voice, the more likely students were to report adopting identities as activists before college.[9] There were no statistically significant differences by racial or ethnic group in students' perceptions of how many of their teachers gave

them a voice at the classroom level. However, low-income students reported significantly fewer opportunities for voice at the classroom level than their middle-class counterparts.[10]

At the school level, having a voice was not associated with either the timing of the activist identity formation or later feelings of activist effectiveness. Only 2% of respondents reported feeling like they had a voice in school-level decision making. The rarity of student voice at both classroom and school levels is not surprising, given the deeply entrenched hierarchical power structure of schools and teachers' reservations about student voice (Cook-Sather, 2006). It is puzzling, however, that more experience with classroom-level voice would be associated with earlier activist identity adoption, while school-level voice would not be.

The lack of a statistically significant finding should not be interpreted as an indictment of the practice. Our findings do not call for civics courses, service-learning, or school-level student voice practices to be abandoned, as these opportunity structures may have bearing on developmental outcomes other than activist identity formation and sense of effectiveness as an activist. Yet supporting activist-oriented clubs, encouraging classroom-level voice, and assigning influential texts do appear to be practices that high school educators can leverage to support activist identity formation and sociopolitical development before students graduate from secondary school.

Influence of College Opportunity Structures on Turn toward Activism

The college environment offers many of the same opportunities as high school to join and form clubs, take classes and read texts, and develop relationships with nonfamilial adults, but with a greater overlay of independence. The college student activists in this study reported a small number of common experiences as students: 90% joined a club or group related to activism, and around two thirds read a text (67%) or took a course (65%) that shaped their identity as activists during college. Apart from these similarities, their experiences were highly individualized. Nevertheless, by most accounts, the curricular and extracurricular experi-

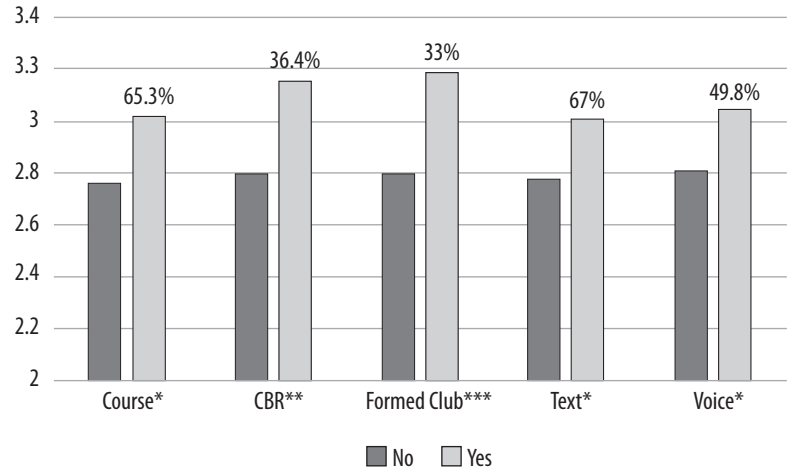


Figure 4.1. Perceived Effectiveness of Own Activism by Involvement in College Opportunities. *Note.* * = $p \leq .05$. ** = $p \leq .01$. *** = $p \leq .001$.

ences they had as college students and the relationships they built with faculty and staff shaped their sociopolitical trajectories as activists. Furthermore, those students who formed a club, took a course that shaped their identity as an activist, participated in a community-based research course, read a text in college that influenced their activist orientation, or experienced feeling that they had a voice in school governance rated their activism as significantly more effective than those who either did not have access to or chose not to avail themselves of such opportunities (figure 4.1).[11]

Clubs and Organizations

Although not surprising given our sampling strategy, which recruited from activist-oriented clubs, respondents highlighted the role of clubs and campus-based organizations in helping them forge activist identities. These clubs, student groups, and organizations exerted a powerful influence on student activist identity development for three main reasons: they offer a strong sense of community; they can span multiple years, allowing students to build their knowledge and skills cumulatively from one year to the next; and they position students as leaders

with decision-making authority. In these ways, clubs and student groups meet the basic tenets of self-determination theory: they satisfy an individual's needs for relatedness or a sense of belonging, competence, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In addition, clubs give students an opportunity structure in which to feel agentive, further develop their worldviews, and plan and execute collective social action, thereby facilitating their sociopolitical development as well as collective and self-determination.

Clubs and organizations offer spaces where like-minded individuals can meet and develop a sense of belonging and shared purpose. Oftentimes, in a club or student-run organization, a group identity will emerge. Such a sense of group membership is less likely to arise in a course, even if it is an elective rather than a course required for a particular major or concentration, because enrolling in a class is different than becoming a member of a club or group. Membership stands as an expression of one's identity, values, and commitments; whereas enrollment in a class simply signals one's interests or curiosities. Furthermore, it is often easier to drop out of a club or organization than it is to drop a class, so those club members who remain involved telegraph their commitment to the core purposes and causes of the group.

Many student activists described their club as a family. These spaces were marked by intense emotional exchanges as well as expressions of love and support. For example, one activist recalled:

> When we have our meetings, we talk about things that we want to do, but we also just like talk about our lives in general, or something that's bothering us; just sharing it, and like knowing that people will be receptive to it and listen to it. And so that, that club like gave me an outlet to like speak about my own experiences, or speak about how I'm really feeling, and like share something that maybe I would feel uncomfortable sharing otherwise. We always say, "What is said here, stays here, but what is learned here leaves here."

The willingness she and her peers felt to share with one another what was on their minds in this group speaks to the sense of safety and support that many clubs and organizations accord their members.

In some cases, feeling a sense of belonging in a club or organization made a student feel more connected to their institution. One respondent described how she had dropped out of school for a period of time, but when she returned to campus, she joined different social justice organizations associated with causes that mattered to her. She mused, "Getting involved in groups on campus really connected me back to school. I am not sure if I would still be here [college] if I had not gotten involved in these things." A sense of belonging is, of course, valuable in its own right as a developmental outcome, but research has also found it to be an antecedent to other important outcomes, including college completion, academic engagement, and self-determination. It may also shape sociopolitical development: our findings suggest that opportunity structures that effectively support sociopolitical development satisfy students' needs for belonging and connectedness. Indeed, none of our interview respondents described themselves as isolated or solitary. Though our recruitment strategy drew heavily on campus-based organizations, the snowball sampling technique did successfully reach some students who were not formally part of activist groups on campus. Nonetheless, all respondents seemed to have some sort of network that connected them to other youth activists on their campus or beyond it.

A second key feature of student clubs and organizations is that they welcomed (and sometimes depended on) consistent involvement over a longer period of time than a fraction of the academic year. Students' involvement in a club or organization was often sustained across the span of several years, whereas most courses typically last only a quarter or a semester. The longevity of their participation in a club or group may explain why these extracurricular opportunities had a cumulatively greater impact on students than a single, one-shot course. In these spaces, students have the opportunity to build their competence each semester. As they collectively plan and put on events, actions, or even meetings, they engage in multiple iterations of what Milbrey McLaughlin (2000, p. 13) calls "cycles of planning, practice, and performance." Each cycle offers students a chance to sharpen the skills and apply the knowledge gleaned from the prior cycle. Each cycle culminates with a reflection period in which students evaluate their performance. This reflection

involves celebrating accomplishments and taking stock of any lessons learned from their most recent action. These lessons then inform the planning of any next steps, as a new cycle ensues.

The seat of power and responsibility in clubs and organizations further distinguishes these spaces from other campus-based learning environments. Clubs and organizations are typically student led, with an adult advisor acting in a supportive or consultative, rather than controlling, capacity. As a result, students feel a greater sense of autonomy and agency in these extracurricular contexts than they might in their courses, where the professor retains rank and power. Even though most clubs have executive boards, founders, leaders, or presidents, the power structure in a club is typically more distributed than it is in the classroom, where the professor holds the authority to set the curriculum, control classroom interactions, and evaluate student participation and work. Because they are in charge of the decisions, students can shape their clubs to reflect their values and priorities, satisfying their need for autonomy.

Furthermore, because leaders of clubs usually have a vested interest in seeing their club's work continue even after they graduate, they are intent on recruiting and mentoring new leaders who can step into their shoes when they graduate; whereas professors have no such personal interest in replacing themselves at the end of the year, or even after four years. Several respondents discussed the ways in which they intentionally worked to groom successors or distribute leadership to ensure that their group would continue to make progress after they left their college or university. Sam, introduced in chapter 2, described the effect on his turn toward activism of the mentoring he encountered in different campus-based clubs: "I wasn't a hardcore student activist as a freshman when I came in. I was just kind of floating around into groups, but then the response of organizations and other friends I had who were in organizations that kind of took me in [changed me]. There was this sense of like mentorship and 'after we graduate, you're going to have to keep organizing and then keep doing this stuff.' " Sam felt that this encouragement from peers and the trust they placed in him to advance their work profoundly affected his development as an activist. Invitations to join an e-board or assume responsibility for the functioning of a club

or organization effectively conveyed support and presented an opportunity for deeper connection to others in the club (relatedness), communicated faith in one's abilities (competence), and called on one to exercise agency, in line with the groups' values and commitments (autonomy). The self-perpetuating mechanisms of many campus groups and clubs helped facilitate students' sense of self-determination and contributed to their activist identity development. Furthermore, the turnover built into clubs as a result of college graduation provided opportunities for distributed leadership among students.

Although participation in clubs was widespread across our sample, only about one third of the respondents reported that they formed a club during their years in college. On some campuses, activism was part of the fabric of campus life, and respondents reported that every opportunity they could have wanted existed already, obviating the need to start a new club. One student activist explained, "I don't think I could even name all the different types of activist clubs that we have here! It feels like there's just always something going on and some way you can get involved. Just the amount of options you have and the different exposures, there's just a lot of that energy here." Other respondents described how important it was to know they could form a club, if they saw the need. Still others explained that they preferred to belong to an informal group of student activists than to petition their university to start a formal club because such a process risked flattening and diluting their work, as they jumped through hoops to receive the university's official approval and imprimatur.

Among our respondents, involvement in student government (19%) and student journalism (12%) was relatively rare, and though several respondents participated in identity-based groups, such as the Black Student Union or an LGBTQIA pride group, activism was not inevitably part of these groups' missions. For example, one student explained, "I'm in the Middle Eastern Students Association, and like I love them, but they're all like, 'Let's do this!' And then no one shows up. So that's more of a social enjoyment, like getting to know the people [type of club]." She contrasted this group with a diversity organization in which she was active, which organized regular protests, dialogues, and actions.

More common among the respondents than participation in identity-based clubs was involvement in cross-campus coalitions and national organizations.

Campus-Based Coalitions and National Networks

A preponderance of our respondents described their involvement in coalitions and networks of activists. Some of these coalitions were campus based. For example, one animal-rights activist explained how his club has forged relationships "with other student entities, other social justice related clubs":

> There's an environmental center that has a lot of events that we've shared a lot of resources with. . . . There's a large psychedelic club and . . . we're talking right now about whether we could provide food for this huge kind of educational event that they're doing and in exchange they'd give us a platform to kind of start some conversation. [There are] other groups that are kind of interested in pairing up with what they're offering. And surprisingly, the psychedelic club is actually a very politically active group, and they're trying to do like responsible drug policy stuff, and they have offered some pretty interesting resources to us in the past, so that's been a fruitful relationship.

In addition to sharing resources with each other, students from different groups forged partnerships to share platforms, craft joint demands, build their collective power, and care for each other. Some respondents discussed tacit reciprocal agreements that existed between clubs on campus to show up and turn out for each other's actions. The account of the student neoactivist below speaks to the power and utility of campus-based coalitions:

> Last year we started forming this student activist network. So it's sort of a formalized structure through which student activist groups on campus can all support each other, and we have a shared list of demands. Because of that, we had weekly network meetings, so representatives from every one of the groups would go. We'd talk every week basically. And during the sit-in, their support was really, really critical. Basically every single

> day, there were people from other groups helping us sort of hold down a presence outside the building, helping to like raise money so that we could feed the people inside, things like that. So they were present like every single day and every single step.

Campus-based coalitions like these may help explain why so few neoactivists in our study saw themselves as single-issue activists. As they worked together with different groups on campus to create these coalitions, neoactivists came to see not only the connections and intersections among the issues that concerned them but also the power of solidarity and the importance of standing with others against various forms of oppression.

While campus-based, intersectional coalitions were certainly prevalent, the presence of national networks and national organizations on college campuses was also ubiquitous. Several of the student activists in this study attended national conferences, which enabled them to meet and form relationships with student activists on other campuses, working on the same issues or causes. These relationships, sustained online, served both educative and affirmative functions. One respondent explained how the connections she made with others at a summer conference "helped me figure out what I'm doing." She continued, "Instead of just being alone and trying to like do protests on my own, I actually have a network of people who I can talk to if I have an idea for some sort of outreach or if I want to disrupt something I can talk to them, or even if I want to help with a community event or things like that, I have a whole network of people I can talk to for whatever I need, regarding activism. And they're all over the country too, so that's pretty awesome." To attend these conferences, students applied for funding from administrators, such as the dean of Student Life or the dean of Diversity and Inclusion, or they used the activity funds that were linked to their clubs. In one case, a student attended a regional conference designed to promote cross-college organizing because her professor had written a grant that enabled her to bring students.

National activist organizations have established chapters on many campuses, and many participants in this study were engaged in these

efforts. National activist organizations with campus presence include such long-standing groups as the United States Student Association, which was established in 1946, and newer organizations such as It's On Us, which was launched in 2014, following recommendations from a White House Task Force to Prevent Sexual Assault. Other commonly discussed national organizations with campus chapters included Planned Parenthood's Generation Action, the Sierra Club's Student Coalition, Direct Action Everywhere, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' Youth Division (peta2), United We Dream, and United Students against Sweatshops.

One student, Paul, who had started a Second Amendment Club on his campus, discussed his involvement with National Rifle Association University or NRA U, which offers trainings to college students to help them "become more effective activists in the fight to protect our freedom, both on and off campus." The NRA U website continues, "In addition to ensuring a more balanced discussion of this issue on campus, NRA staff will talk about the various NRA programs in which students can participate. Students will also learn about opportunities to work with like-minded activists in their area . . . [and] will receive free fraternal items, such as NRA U hats, t-shirts, and stickers" (National Rifle Association, 2010). Though different in focus from many of the more progressive social justice organizations students discussed in this study, the strategies deployed by NRA U to reach and activate college students did not differ in marked ways from those used by other national organizations.

Some national organizations with a campus presence are intentionally structured as networks with campus outposts. These include the Student Power Network, the Student Divestment Network, and Roosevelt Campus Network, all mentioned by activists in this study. Through their connection to national organizations or networks, student activists gained access to resources and support they might not have otherwise had. While these connections certainly inspired ideas for local, campus-based campaigns and activities, they also enabled activists to feel that their local efforts "added up" and contributed to important movement building and social change work beyond their campus.

Relationships with Faculty and Staff

Interview respondents mentioned clubs and organizations one-and-a-half times as often as they discussed their relationships with faculty and staff. Nonetheless, these relationships emerged as an important theme in respondents' accounts of their turn toward activism, representing yet another opportunity structure available in the college learning environment. Notably, these relationships extended beyond the confines of the classroom, serving as key sources of solidarity, social capital, and support. As such, they provided yet another driver for activists' sense of collective and self-determination by extending that sense of belonging beyond peers to adults in the university community.

Solidarity

Student activists discussed how important it was to them when faculty turned out for protests or rallies they had organized or signed petitions or letters they had penned. They appreciated these shows of solidarity because the adult involvement seemed to sanction the activists' efforts, values, and goals. These adults validated the activists' autonomy and competence and helped buttress their sense of belonging. As one student neoactivist in a midwestern state explained, "I'll even recognize faculty when I participate in activism, so in some ways that helps me because I'm able to create relationships or create community through believing in the same causes. We often say in [State] that the progressive community is small, so it's important that we are loud and stick together, so that community is really helpful." In addition to building a sense of community connection, professors and staff can convey individualized support through their interactions with student activists.

Support

Many student neoactivists noted that they turned to particular professors or staff in centers on campus for emotional support as well as strategic advice, and that the guidance and encouragement these adults provided often helped fuel their motivation and steer their efforts. One

student described how receptive professors were to hearing her speak about her experiences and about issues that were bothering her. She found having such outlets to be very "helpful." Several respondents described their professors as generally sympathetic to and supportive of their activism, which helped them feel that they were on the right path.

Other respondents highlighted the role played by faculty advisors of clubs and student groups. One contrasted his faculty advisor with the typical "rubber stamp" advisor because he gave useful feedback and advice around the club's direction and next steps. Another respondent appreciated her club's advisor because he always praised her efforts and pointed out how "phenomenal" and "awesome" she was. "Those are moments where like I should be humble right now, but it's like, 'Man, maybe I am doing everything for a reason; like maybe I am making a difference.' " Words of encouragement from a respected adult could lift the spirits and build the sense of agency of activists.

Professors and staff who had been involved in student activism when they were younger were particularly valued for their insights. One respondent described her group's reliance on "people that have years of experience in certain fields and understand what common mistakes people make, how to push the university to make a certain change. It's been really helpful to have that, that base of support on campus." Some respondents highlighted the "insider knowledge" certain professors and staff were able to share with them about the levers of institutional change or institutional back stories. Others appreciated how senior staff could help them understand the various implications of their activism, including when and how they might get into trouble with the law.

In addition to offering emotional support and providing advice to inform the students' activism, some professors advised students about how to connect their activism to their coursework. For example, one student activist shared the following anecdote: "One of my religion professors noticed [my involvement in activism], and he said, 'Why don't you make something out of this while you're here?' And I was like, 'What do you mean?' And he mentioned how all of my electives were all

leading up to a minor in [a certain area]. So I think it's definitely helped me in a positive way." In doing this kind of advising, professors and staff transmitted cultural and institutional capital to students, enabling them to accrue minors, certificates, and other coveted credentials.

Social Capital

On top of these forms of capital, professors and staff generated social capital for students, not only by connecting with them individually but also by linking them to other networks or people in positions of power. One respondent discussed her relationship with the Title IX coordinator at her school, and how she was able to leverage that relationship to get a face-to-face meeting with her university's president to discuss her concerns about how sexual assault cases were being handled on their campus. Another respondent explained how many "connections [there are] going back and forth between all levels" of one center on campus "and also at other universities and their centers as well . . . so you have support and you also have the networking abilities." The connections between and among students and staff in this center meant that she and her peers felt well supported, while the connections they were able to make through the center to other campuses helped energize and amplify their activist work.

A Lack of Support

Not all mentions of professors and staff were uniformly positive. Some professors insulted, hurt, or undermined students; some said or did things that students found problematic. One African American student activist described how a professor singled her out to respond to the Black athletes' protests of the national anthem. "That made me mad. I had to give some knowledge to him very quickly." Typically, in these kinds of cases, students identified another professor or staff member to whom they could turn to process the episode.

Not all colleges and universities, however, have faculty and staff who actively or openly support activism, and the absence of such mentoring was keenly felt by students on these campuses. Responding to the ques-

tion of what institutional supports would have been helpful to his activism, one neoactivist commented:

> I think definitely having someone who's like an adult, like thirties and up, that like has been in this work for a long time would have helped a lot, because there are times when it's just—we have absolutely no clue what to do, and we're all just sitting around like wondering, and we don't know enough history. We don't know what they did in the nineties to organize around a particular issue that was really successful, and so, I think having an older person who knows more than we do, like both history and life stuff, would be very helpful. Also just it's nice to bounce ideas off of them and see what they think.

As if echoing these sentiments, another activist reflected, "Having that validation from somebody who is in a prestige position of authority would have been really helpful; the mentorship that goes with that would have also been really helpful, because it was a lot of us having to figure it out on our own and a lot of us learning from other students who have been doing it only one or two years more than us so it would've been nice to have some older folks helping us." Students respect professors and staff for their institutional memory and analysis as well as their life experience, and many neoactivists in our study yearned for mentoring from adults who had been student activists. Although some, like Yeej, had these relationships, others, like Blake, "modeled [themselves] after successful social justice movements of the past," without having any personal connection to prior generations' movement actors. Without guidance from former student activists who were now adults, these neoactivists relied on readings about the history of social movements and social activism to inform their efforts.

Courses and Texts

Beyond expressing support for activism and offering advice, professors could and did influence activists' work and identity development with their courses. The kinds of knowledge, analysis, and language to which professors exposed students through their syllabi and pedagogy impacted

the way some activists understood and framed their efforts. Sixty-seven percent of our survey respondents indicated that they had taken a course during college that shaped their identity as activists. Only one third of respondents had taken a service-learning course or a community-based research course, so these types of courses were not the only ones to influence student activists.[12] In interviews, when asked about the courses that had impacted their activist trajectories, respondents name a wide range of courses, from political science and sociology to women's studies, from English to education to ethics.

Coursework Affects Activism

Most students described how courses built their understanding of particular issues or demonstrated the need for activism; however, some students felt that their classes served to validate what they already knew and gave them a framework in which to situate their activism or a lexicon to use to discuss it. One respondent described how his "political philosophy classes definitely changed my view of how you should organize and what democratic participation looked like." He explained that when he was in high school, he conceptualized democratic participation as "election day," but as a result of his courses, he now saw it as "going out every day and making sure that people are getting what they need to live the best life they can live." He credited his professors with helping him make this shift in his thinking. Another respondent discussed how her "professors have provided critical insight, whether it's critical race theory or structural violence, and challenged my thought process in and outside of the class." She continued, "It wasn't enough for me to repeat what they had already taught. They wanted to know what I thought and what I would do with the information given." By holding her accountable for acting on her newfound knowledge, her professors helped spur her to activism and encouraged her to link her critical consciousness to societal involvement.

Cutting across disciplines and topics were three common pedagogical moves that distinguished the courses that activists identified as having been particularly influential: project-based learning, discussion-based learning, and the use of powerful texts. In what follows, I offer

two brief cases to illustrate the impact of the first two of these strategies on the turn toward activism, and then present a general overview of the third as it impacted students' sociopolitical development.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: THE CASE OF SHELBY

At the time of our interview, Shelby was an outright activist, engaged in numerous causes both on campus and beyond it. She explained, "I'm really active in my community politically and within my university, and just pretty much everywhere that I'm a part of." Although she focused primarily on reproductive justice and sexual education, "everything that I work on intersects really, really well." Recently, she had worked on passing Medicaid expansion in her state, extending "universal in-home care for seniors and folks with disabilities" across the state, and pushing her university's president to respond to a "Dear Colleagues" letter that Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos had sent about changes to Title IX. In addition, Shelby continued, "I write a lot in my school's newspaper, I call my senators all the time, and last week on election day, I collected signatures to get an initiative on the ballot for 2018." She was also working with her state representative to draft legislation to repeal a law prohibiting the sale of over-the-counter medication through vending machines, with the goal of providing contraceptive vending machines on campus.

Shelby had not always been so deeply involved in activism, however. She credits a particular course she took during her freshman year with setting her on the path. On arriving at college, Shelby was placed in a "freshman experience" course called "Innovation and Entrepreneurship." All freshmen had to take these "experience" courses, but each had a different theme. Learning of her assignment, Shelby promptly tried to switch to a different freshman experience course because "business is not what I was into. I had no place in a business class. So I really wasn't feeling it at first." Her attempts to switch out of the course were unsuccessful, however, so she decided to make the best of it. The course assigned students a semester-long project: "We were told to pick a social issue and advocate for it, and that was pretty much it." Making headlines at that time was the state's defunding of Planned Parenthood, so

she and a partner chose that issue as their focus. Shelby attended a "pink-out rally" in her local city to find her footing for her project. She recalled, "We weren't really sure what we were trying to accomplish with this project, and so our first thing that we did was we went to this event. So, I just went to go, and I happened to talk to the right people while I was there, and I scheduled a one-on-one meeting for like the week after, and then it just snowballed from there, so it kind of happened by accident." As their project progressed, she and her partner decided to form a Planned Parenthood Generation Action (PPGA) student group chapter on their campus.

> Our project was actually the one that yielded the most results, like the most tangible results from the whole class, from two people who didn't want to be in the class at all. I tried really hard to get out of that class. Actually, I'm glad I didn't, because of course, this never would've happened. . . . That year in May we won "New Student Group of the Year" at school. It's actually really wild to think about it now, that that was two years ago. So, yeah it snowballed; it was actually really incredible.

Following the course, Shelby's activism expanded. The PPGA chapter is thriving, hosting regular sexpert panels; helping organize the local city's first Slut Walk, which Shelby described as "a transnational movement against sexual assault"; and holding regular sexual education events, such as sex bingo and a condom fashion show. In addition, they "do a lot of abortion stigma reduction canvassing with Planned Parenthood." She continued: "We do Title IX advocacy work. We work with Health & Counseling to do STD testing, and we work with an organization in [our local community] that does HIV and AIDS outreach and treatment." Through her work with PPGA and causes that she sees as related, Shelby directed her activism both inward to address campus practices and outward to address community needs.

Looking back on her college career, Shelby credits her freshman experience project with motivating her to choose gender and women's studies as her major, introducing her "to all these incredible people," and shaping the course of her activism. "I don't know where I would be if I wasn't in that godforsaken class." When asked what else might have

influenced her journey as an activist, she reflected, "I don't know if I was just born with the personality to be an activist or what, but it started slow. It started when I was young, and then it kind of just turned into something that I never imagined." Certainly, a mix of factors predisposed Shelby to activism, but it was clear that her project on Planned Parenthood helped prompt her turn in that direction.

The signature assignment in Shelby's freshman experience course reflects tenets of action civics, action research projects, and community-based research in that it encouraged the students to study an issue in their local community and take action based on their findings. Research has found that these kinds of political action projects can enhance students' political knowledge and understanding, strengthen their political skills, and deepen their political motivation (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007). In addition, our research shows that they can help activate or accelerate students' activist identity development and engagement.

DISCUSSION-BASED LEARNING: THE CASE OF ADIRA

Adira, an outright activist, explained that it wasn't until college that she first encountered racism, sexism, and Islamophobia. She grew up in a diverse, progressive community, where she theoretically knew these prejudices existed but never experienced them directly. Various episodes on campus, however, convinced her that she needed to take action to combat bigotry. She now describes herself as someone who is "not comfortable with letting something go that I know is wrong or that I believe is wrong, or seeing someone mistreated just go, like unprotected or like not acknowledged." If she did, she explains, "I would feel upset with myself if I allowed that to happen. And so that's why I've continued with the social activism."

As a freshman, Adira was "nervous" about fitting into her new environment. When she heard racist or sexist remarks, her initial reaction was, "'Oh my gosh, like, I don't want to get involved. People aren't going to like me [if I say something].' It's just a new place, and I don't want to start off on the bad foot. But I've realized that like you have to be uncomfortable, or you have to be comfortable with being uncom-

fortable, because that's the only way that things will change." Adira credits an experience in a discussion-based course called "The American Dream" with helping her come to that realization and develop that comfort and sense of agency.

The course focused on American identity, and one unit explored immigration. The class was discussing why people who are immigrants do not join the military. As the daughter of two immigrants, Adira felt the discussion personally. She recalled that the student next to her made a comment about how immigrants "do not care about becoming American; they just want to provide for their families and send money back to their families, and they don't care about becoming citizens." The comment shocked and offended Adira, and though she was nervous to speak up, she knew she had to respond. She challenged her classmate: "I was like, 'Wait! I don't think that's true. I personally don't think it's fair for you to say that people who are immigrants don't care about being American, because I have family members who are immigrants, and they've worked very hard to be where they are, and I know people whose parents are immigrants, who are just like trying to provide the best for their families and their families back home, and there's nothing wrong with working and providing for the people that you love.' " The classmate was "completely taken aback" but tried to defend her point. While Adira continued to engage with her, "everyone else in the class was kind of just trailing out, looking uncomfortable, avoiding the situation."

Adira left that particular class feeling happy and proud of herself. That episode solidified for her the necessity of various forms of activism and the importance of "standing up." She concluded, "Sometimes you just feel uncomfortable, and you feel like, 'Oh my gosh! I'm going to put myself in like this uncomfortable situation.' But you gotta push through it, and realize it's okay to feel uncomfortable." For Adira, social activism is all about embracing discomfort, putting yourself "out there," and pushing through to a more just and inclusive future.

The absence of the professor's involvement or intervention in Adira's account of this situation was striking. The professor apparently did not try to referee the exchange, to pull more students into it, or to redirect the two women. Although it is difficult to know why the professor may

have chosen this course of action or whether the professor would even share Adira's perception of what happened in class that day, giving students the space and time to air differing perspectives *is* a pedagogical strategy, one that allowed Adira to take a personal and intellectual risk and one that marked a significant moment in her turn toward activism. Allowing students to discuss controversial issues is another one of the "best practices" or "proven strategies" for promoting civic learning (Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017), and one of the five effective pedagogical strategies associated with the promotion of responsible political engagement among college students (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007). Reviewing the literature on civic education, David Campbell (2006) writes, "Woven throughout the research literature on civic curriculum is one consistent conclusion: the most effective civics instruction involves the free and open discussion of current political events within the classroom" (p. 63). Certainly the power of such pedagogical moves was reflected in Adira's story of her turn toward activism. Again, however, it is important to differentiate between productive conversations that allow young people to grapple with current sociopolitical issues and debates that can devolve into attacks on someone's identity or humanity. By centering concepts of epistemic justice and trust, which acknowledge that all knowledge is limited and that we can learn from the lived experiences of others and the funds of knowledge they possess, educators can manage these discourses in the classroom from becoming dehumanizing and disempowering.

TEXTS

Another significant way in which professors shaped students' sociopolitical development was by exposing them to certain authors and texts. Just over two thirds of the respondents indicated that they read a text in college that informed their identity as activists, and for 70% of these respondents, that text had been assigned by a professor. The texts they named ranged widely, and unlike the high school texts, the college texts did not include any repeated mentions.

Students described how these texts informed their understanding of social issues, influenced their social analysis, and motivated them to en-

gage in activism. One student described a course in which "every single reading we do, I'm like, 'Oh my God!' Like you know what I mean? It's that kind of class where every reading is so powerful." Another respondent who named Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw's text on intersectionality, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*, as particularly influential, explained how these readings "raise[d] my consciousness and motivate[d] me to go into the communities and make social change." He continued to explain how he views his coursework as "a stepping stone to get to a state of consciousness that will help me formulate better decisions, plans, goals, and relationships that will do something about the issues in this world. From racism to veganism, I am determined to use academics to the best of my ability to bring social justice into the communities I'm immersed with." From the perspective of sociopolitical development, these texts played a role in shaping student activists' critical consciousness and worldviews. The readings gave them insight into particular social problems, lenses through which to view current events, and a deeper understanding of their place in society.

Activism Affects Coursework

Just as certain courses helped propel students' turns toward activism, so did their activism exert an influence on students' coursework and grades. For most of the interview respondents, the impact was singularly positive, with 42.5% of the interview respondents describing how their activism enhanced their engagement and learning in courses. A small share of students felt that their activism came at a cost to their academics, with 12.5% reporting only a negative effect. Fifteen percent felt that their activism had both positive and negative implications for their coursework, and 30% felt that it had no impact on their coursework and grades.

POSITIVE EFFECT

Students described how their activism enabled them to build relationships with professors, make connections across classes, and develop a *praxis*, or the intermingling of theory and practice, abstract ideas and

applied work. Several students used the words *connect* or *apply* when reflecting on how their activism has affected their coursework. One explained that because of her activism, "everything is all coming together and clicking" in her political science courses. Another respondent described how his activism had enhanced his performance as a student because of the links he was able to make between the theories he was taught and his activism: "When I'm learning about really deep theory stuff, I try to find a way to connect it to what I'm doing in my activism. . . . Because it's not just like, okay I understand the theory. I can see how it applies to real life and how it has applied to my life and can in the future. So I think kind of my understanding of the holistic learning outside the classroom has made me a much stronger student inside the classroom." A third respondent felt that because he was able to bring what he learned from the activist spaces into his classes, "if anything, it [activism] has helped my school work a lot." He continued, "Now I'm not just taking a class on theory. Now I'm actually applying what I've learned from my various [activist] experiences into my school work. It's actually very interestingly what got me two A's for my class last semester." Students who were able to forge linkages between their activist involvement and their coursework came to see their coursework, especially "the deep theory stuff," as more relevant and meaningful than they believe they otherwise would have. These links made them more passionate and more invested in the course material, and in some cases, more successful students.

One student activist explained that she worked harder in her classes not because of how interesting or useful she found the class material but because of how important it was to her that activists be seen as credible, intellectually and academically.

> It [activism] actually pushes me to work harder in school, believe it or not. Because I want to be an influence on others, and I know that it requires hard work. I can't just be an activist and tell them about the principles and ideals that I hold, one of them being working hard and performing to your best. So, it has pushed me to focus on my schoolwork and not only try so much just to get the grade, but to actually

> grasp concepts of things that are actually important, so that I can help other people learn. And so when they speak to me, they don't just see, "Oh she's active, but her work isn't good."

This respondent felt that understanding her coursework and succeeding academically would make her a more influential activist. Because she cared so much about being an effective activist, she became more invested in her classes than she might have otherwise. As another respondent put it, academics and activism "are not mutually exclusive, but can inform each other."

NEGATIVE EFFECT

A fraction of interview respondents (28%) felt that their activism took a toll on their schoolwork, but of those, more than half felt that these negative effects were counterbalanced by positive effects on their academics. Students discussed how their grades "have slipped" or how they "fall behind" on their schoolwork when the demands on their time from their activism intensify.

Often, discussion of negative effects was linked to reflections on priorities. For example, one respondent shared, "It's easy to prioritize something that feels immediate, something that feels really important, like challenging a school to do better in some way, versus writing a history paper. So at times it has felt like I've neglected schoolwork. I don't think I've ever skipped a class, but I've chosen to disengage from a class or you know push something aside because I thought something more pressing needed to be done." Another student activist echoed:

> It [activism] kind of does hurt academics because you're like, "I need to call some congressmen, but I also need to do some homework. Mmm, I want to call some congressmen first." So it's definitely hurt academics in that way, but I kind of always tell myself that like you know in ten years from now, I'm not going to remember this homework assignment, but I am going to remember being a part of a movement and being part of that march, or sitting down with friends and calling people and just doing things like that. So I would kind of rather do the things that make the memories, while also still trying to get good grades.

A couple of respondents did prioritize their academics over their activism and explained that they had to cut back on their activism to get their grades back up.

NO DIRECT EFFECT

About 30% of the interview respondents felt that their activism neither hurt nor helped their schoolwork or grades. They had learned to balance their activist and academic responsibilities. They spoke about time management, "staying balanced, and staying organized." They knew when to "step back" from certain responsibilities, when to "reprioritize," and when to "sacrifice a few hours of sleep to get it all done." As one student activist explained, "Sometimes it's the activism that has to take a back seat, and sometimes it's school that takes a back seat." Another reflected, "Obviously we don't make it to every action that's happening. There are times when we just have to sit back and actually focus on schoolwork. But we just balance it very carefully because all of us do work, and all of us do have school. . . . It's a very delicate balance, and being able to balance it comes from not only a lot of self-discipline but also knowing that you care." Many of the interview respondents were quick to acknowledge that it could be difficult to be both a student and an activist; however, very few felt that one came at the expense of the other. They learned to work the hyphen (Fine, 1998) or the space between "student" and "activist," recognizing that both identities come with responsibilities, which can sometimes overlap and sometimes compete.

The Intellectual Dimension of Activism

The student activists we interviewed understood that a significant part of the work of activism is intellectual. They spoke about the importance of becoming educated, and many of the neoactivists spent a fair amount of their time reading and learning about the past. To be effective as activists, they knew they needed to grasp not only the current moment, or the "cultural groundswell," as one respondent put it, but also the histo-

ries of both oppression and activism in the United States. They wanted to "stay current" with the latest knowledge emerging in the issue areas that concerned them, but they also wanted to learn about social movements and effective organizing strategies and tactics that had been deployed in the past. They wanted to be able to position themselves historically and to understand their place in the ongoing struggle for liberation. Referencing Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous line, "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice," which Obama frequently referenced and which King paraphrased from an abolitionist minister's sermon, one respondent explained how this historical, but forward-looking perspective motivated her to "continue to fight for what is right despite the obstacles."

Several respondents commented on the importance of understanding the various ways in which communities have been disenfranchised over time, and how these circuits of oppression connect and accumulate. One respondent summed up the links between education and activism:

> When you're just getting into this type of work, it definitely takes a lot of education because there are a lot of things even myself as an African American didn't even know about—things that are happening in the community or the history behind things, or how other people are affected by certain things like systematic oppression or institutional racism. That has really caused me to understand, to see what's going on in the world and how I can get involved. Definitely education is the first key because you cannot teach someone else if you are ignorant yourself. So I really see [education] as a great way and a great tool in helping myself become more aware of what's going on in the world, how and why things are, and how things can change.

Although some student activists identified ways in which their courses awakened their sense of critical consciousness and sparked their turns toward activism, many more described their quest for knowledge as something to which their activism had given rise. Their involvement in activism had triggered a new thirst for understanding. Self-education

was a prominent theme in many of the interviews, and it surfaced as a defining feature of the turn toward activism.

To educate themselves, student activists engaged in several strategies. They enrolled in particular courses they felt they needed, sought out professors and "professionals" or "experts" for conversation, held intense discussions with their peers, and read widely. They read books as well as online articles and posts. Many of the respondents who read online were careful to point out that they read work from various perspectives. For example, one student activist commented, "I try to read a wide variety of sources. I don't want to read from just one particular narrative." She balanced her reading of the *New York Times*, *Politico*, and the *Los Angeles Times* with the *Drudge Report* and *Breitbart*, so that she wouldn't become "out of touch." Another respondent noted that her use of social media to inform her activism "challenges [her] to do [her] own research":

> For example, I see click bait but I make sure to check the facts before giving way to sensationalized headlines. So it challenges me to think about my sources as well as explore the events as they are or have happened. I didn't know about the DAPL [Dakota Access Pipeline] until social media. I didn't know about Mike Brown and the other string of Black killings until social media. I mean, there are even Black killings that happened, but aren't ever reported on. It's been a source of more holistic information, but also pushes me to explore every angle.

In addition to seeking out readings that offer different angles of vision, student activists intentionally looked for or created opportunities to learn from peers with differing perspectives. Some respondents described how they put themselves into situations, debates, and discussions where they could hear the counterarguments to their position or worldviews that deviated from their own, including those with which they were less familiar or comfortable. One respondent who organized such a debate walked away with the realization that "I'm a strong activist, but I still always have developing to do. So [the debate] reiterated for me [the importance of] being able to continue to educate myself." The student activists in this study took the project of learning quite

seriously. A core, albeit quieter, part of their activism was the active pursuit of knowledge.

Much of the research on the civic engagement and sociopolitical development of young people evaluates programs that are either school based or community based and seeks to identify their effectiveness over time influencing desired outcomes. Our study takes a different tack by beginning with the outcome of interest—civically engaged students who identify as activists—and looking backward to identify the key educational influences they believe shaped their development.

At the high school level, we did not find significant effects for access to either civics courses or service-learning courses. Furthermore, these opportunities appear to be relatively rare, with only half of the student activists reporting that they experienced a civics course and one third reporting having experienced service-learning pedagogy in high school (see table 4.1). We also did not find strong consistent patterns with respect to participation in student government. (This is not to say that such opportunities do not have an effect on students' sociopolitical development, but that such an effect was not widespread or highly indicated among our sample.) We did find that those who became activists in high school were more likely to have reported reading an influential text in high school that shaped their identity as an activist, participating in activist-oriented clubs, and experiencing student voice at the classroom level. Our results suggest that high schools that take seriously their missions to promote actively engaged citizens would do well to focus on engaging students in reading powerful texts, supporting extracurricular programs, and enhancing opportunities for student voice.

In the college and university setting, we found that more than half the student activists (57%) believed that their involvement in activism enhanced their coursework and academic experience, though 15% of these students could also identify negative impacts. Clubs were particularly formative spaces for the student activists' intellectual development. Relationships with faculty and staff and experiences in project-based and discussion-based courses also proved meaningful, as did reading influential texts.

If sociopolitical development depends on opportunity structures that mediate the relationship between one's worldview and one's societal involvement, then courses and clubs constitute two important spaces on college campuses for sociopolitical maturation. When these courses or clubs address issues of oppression, promote civil discourse, connect to students' identities or values, and engage students in action, they help students not only to build their critical consciousness but also to connect their growing intellectual understanding to their social and political behaviors.

Colleges and universities that wish to support the cognitive dimension of student activists' sociopolitical development can encourage the establishment of student clubs, financially as well as symbolically; limit class sizes to enable rich discussion and project-based pedagogies that connect the course material to present-day issues and concerns; and entreat faculty and staff to engage substantively and respectfully with students' interests and identities, especially with regard to current events or pressing social problems. Such opportunities can help students develop and refine their worldviews and base their activism on a robust intellectual foundation of informed critical thought and analysis. In addition, these opportunity structures bring relational and emotional benefits, which further support college student activists' sociopolitical development as engaged civic actors.

[FIVE]

The Behavioral Dimension of Activism

Strategies and Successes

> I have connected on Facebook with organizers from all over the country, and we're seeing each other on our Facebook feeds, and getting all this reinforcement. I'm just seeing the best of what they're doing, you know? I don't see all the hard work, all the stress. I just see the results, and that is encouraging and motivating.

Although Benjamin, quoted above, derived inspiration from the accomplishments of the other racial justice activists with whom he was connected over social media, he knew that he had only a partial view of their efforts. He was keenly aware of the invisible labor that goes into orchestrating a powerful action or effecting important outcomes.

Like many other respondents, Benjamin described activism as work—"hard work." Emphasizing this point, Oberlin students in the Black Student Union demanded in 2015 that students be paid $8.20 an hour for organizing protests. The students included this demand among others to draw attention to the unpaid labor they perform on campus for the benefit of the institution. As an activist in this study explained, "It takes a lot of time to like be involved. You continuously have to plan things, react to things, be proactive. And it's really hard because you don't get the support that you need . . . while doing something that honestly is really necessary for the university." This chapter looks beyond

the Facebook feeds and newspaper headlines to understand the nature of the work that activists perform, the inroads they have made on their campuses and beyond, and those they continue to seek. It takes up the following research questions: what do student activists do as activists, what have they achieved, and what do they hope to achieve? I begin by cataloguing their accomplishments, before turning to the strategies student activists have used to achieve these changes and surmount the challenges that have confronted them.

While continuing to examine activism as a developmental process, I also explore it as a social change process in this chapter, focusing more closely on the tangible outcomes and external mechanics of activism than on its psychological outcomes and internal mechanics. In this chapter, I move from considering how activism affects the activists to how it impacts the institutions and systems they target. How do the activists challenge and change their colleges and universities? Activists will readily admit that change can be a "slow process"; it takes time, vigorous effort, and constant vigilance to erode entrenched norms, uproot unjust policies, and establish new practices. How do activists take stock of their work and its impact? What strategies do they believe enable them to make headway? What factors impede their progress? What does "societal involvement" look like? I examine the behavioral dimension of activism, the publicly enacted, labor-intensive facets of working for institutional and social change.

Accomplishments

When asked to describe any accomplishments they had achieved through their activism, the participants in this study were quick and confident in their responses, showing they had mastered one of the fundamental tasks of the activist: to recognize the wins, even when they are small or distinct from the larger, overarching goals. One activist, who was involved with a sit-in to pressure her university to divest from fossil fuels, explained the importance of defining success in varied ways: "We had a lot of other goals going into [the sit-in] because we thought that we needed to create our own goals that we can win and that we don't need

to depend on the administration for in terms of their success or failure, like politicizing other students on campus." Even though the sit-in did not result in a commitment from the university to divest, the action was still considered a "win" because it informed and excited students about becoming involved in the fossil fuel divestment movement. When discussing their accomplishments, the activists in this study alluded to five types of wins: changing individual hearts and minds, successfully orchestrating an event or action, building up organizational power, promoting cultural shifts in the institution, and securing policy change. These themes were evenly represented in the data and (with the exception of organizational power) across institutional types and locations.

Changing Hearts and Minds

> I feel like the wins that I always value the most are on a more personal level, when I've had people come up and say, "What you're doing really matters," or "I've experienced what you're talking about." Those to me are the most important—just having those individual people have their eyes opened.

Several activists voiced the sentiment that success in activism could be defined by changing one individual's understanding of an issue or willingness to engage in a cause. Though seemingly small scale, especially when compared with the more ambitious goals of changing society, wins of this sort honor the fundamental relational and educational nature of activism.

Activism is relational work because effective activism depends on relationship building within and beyond activist circles. As discussed in chapter 3, student activists in this study spoke warmly of their relationships with their fellow student activists, and they highlighted the ways in which their peers supported them emotionally and intellectually. As discussed in chapter 4, their connections to national networks and other activist groups both on and beyond their campuses played important roles in their cognitive development as activists. Though our study did include a handful of activists who operated more independently, the

student neoactivists recognized and emphasized the importance of collective action. Reaching new audiences and winning over adversaries and skeptics were all important goals of the work, and accomplishing these goals requires interaction.

Many activists understood their relational work as incremental and cumulative: "If we can reach one person or we get one or two people to come to an event who've never come before and they have learnt something new, then we have done our job," explained one activist. He continued, "The key that I've learned is starting small and still recognizing that we are making an impact if you at least reach one person . . . because it starts with one, who can educate another person, who can educate another person, who can educate another person." This approach offers a slow but steady path toward social change, as it illustrates how small wins, such as changing an individual's perspective, can add up to bigger cultural shifts.

Often when activists spoke of changing individuals' hearts and minds, they used words such as *teach*, *educate*, *learn*, and *understand*. These words signaled the educational nature of activist work. One activist, for example, spoke of her work as "planting a seed when you're presenting people with some information that they have been otherwise shut off to or just never heard before." Another said that "the smallest conversations are a win" when they succeed in "getting people [to become] more aware." As an example, she recalled a conversation with a male friend about the challenges women face that he had never before considered. Paul recounted a conversation he had with a professor whose perspective on gun rights he was able to change by pointing out that students currently do not retaliate with violence when they receive a bad grade, so why would we expect concealed-carry provisions to change that norm. "That moment of him saying, 'Oh, I've never quite thought of it that way before.' That's the specific example, but in general I really like getting that feeling out of people and they can say, 'Hunh! I hadn't considered that perspective before.' " These types of "more personal" wins of changing someone's perspective tended to involve dialogue, sometimes public and sometimes intimate, rather than dramatic public action.

Organizing and Orchestrating an Event

In contrast to these quiet conversations, much of the work activists described involved planning and executing large-scale public events or actions, including sit-ins, rallies, marches, demonstrations, panels, and educational programs, and so when they were asked to highlight their wins, several activists pointed to the successful orchestration of such events. In some cases, the activists marked success by better turnout than they had expected; in other cases, they marked success by the appreciation people in attendance expressed for the event; and in still other cases, the event was successful because it marked the culmination of so much strategizing, planning, and preparation that seeing it come to fruition felt gratifying. Still other events were seen as "wins" because they resulted in demands being met or some kind of behavioral change. For example, Shelby felt that the sexpert panel she helped organize, the first of its kind on her campus, was successful because in its aftermath, her university's health services "ran out of STD testing kits twice because so many students went and learned how prevalent sexually transmitted diseases are." Another activist who helped organize a "This Is Our [College Name]" walkout on the day of President Trump's inauguration categorized the event as a triumph not only because of the number of students who participated both in person and on linked social media platforms, but also because the administration acceded to one of the demands they released during the walkout: that "the college acknowledge the hurt that's happening on the campus right now in a way that's tied very transparently to folks of color and queer folks." Following the walkout, the administration released an official college statement that acknowledged the pain felt by minoritized students on campus. "That was a huge win because it felt very hard to have [the college] be transparent about these issues." Not all actions resulted in such measurable outcomes. Whether or not the event or action led to a concrete change, respondents felt that the visibility of their activism through such events counted as an accomplishment, as it demonstrated their commitment and determination and helped attract attention to a cause.

Building up Organizational Power

Ninety percent of the activists in this study were affiliated with clubs, chapters, or organizations on their campuses, and increasing the membership, profile, or impact of their group was described as a "win" by nearly one third of the respondents in response to our question about accomplishments. This type of victory was particularly common among respondents who had started the groups themselves. These respondents were quick to point out that starting a new club can be "an uphill battle," so simply getting a new club off the ground and running was something to celebrate.

Several respondents highlighted growth in the membership of their organization as a strong indicator of success. For example, one activist who started an It's On Us chapter on her campus recounted how the first meeting she held attracted ten people, and the second meeting drew more people than the meeting room could accommodate: "It has just been hugely supported and just in ways that I never thought would happen, especially for a student organization that's brand-new and in its infancy. . . . I would definitely say that that was probably my most recent win: knowing we have so many people who are dedicated to it, who are passionate about it, that are coming together now and ready to work towards it is a huge thing." Another activist who started a sexual assault prevention organization discussed how in the organization's first year they "struggled with getting membership because we were a new organization and it's hard to sell that topic." However, by the next year, membership had doubled, and "we are no longer having the problems of who's at what event because we had so few people." Beyond raw numbers, she felt that the sense of connection and support, the "family-like vibe" the members had built with each other, constituted the most important win. An activist involved in his campus's Direct Action Everywhere chapter explained that membership serves as a key "measure of the health of our chapter and our community," and "our successes up until this point" have included becoming "good at getting people in the door." Staging creative actions, recording them, and sharing them on social media had proved to be "effective" tools for "getting

people to become interested in getting involved with the chapter." Activists understood that members were key to building the organization's capacity to engage in a variety of ways and to building its base of power, so that it could more effectively pressure decision makers or shift dominant cultural norms.

Another key marker of organizational power cited by some respondents was their ability to secure meetings with administrators and people in positions of power. One activist, who was part of an informal group of students fighting for greater support for students of color on campus, pointed to the fact that the group had been able to meet with the board of trustees as a sign of both the respect their group had earned and the traction they were gaining in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. Flipping this script, another activist explained how he and his peers had realized that campus administrators would call meetings with certain student leaders at the university to solicit their opinions and talk to them about various campus matters, but they would never reach out to more marginalized groups of students. To force the administrators to come to them, they shut down the largest computer center at the university one day and orchestrated a speak-out. Administrators came to the action, engaged in dialogue, and then scheduled further follow-up conversations with the participants. As the activist said, "The speak-out made them come out and talk to us, and that was the goal. And I really think it effected—it was a very positive experience."

While gaining an audience with decision makers is one thing, securing a seat at the decision-making table is another. For some groups, infiltrating established systems and committee structures represented a significant victory. An activist involved in fighting for ethnic studies curricula initially responded to the question of wins by noting, "The meeting with the president was definitely a really big step." He continued, "On top of that, we were able to have some students who were involved with us sitting on the student committee for that program. So I think we definitely accomplished the part where we became part of the decision making." An activist at a small liberal arts college was pleased to report that he and his peers had recently won a campaign to establish a stu-

dent representative seat on the college's board of trustees. Although this campaign was not connected to any formal student group per se, it was considered emblematic of the power of organized student activists to achieve structural change. Other activists discussed attaining seats on curriculum committees, hiring committees, climate committees, and various governance bodies as a way to ensure that their concerns would be heard and their voices represented inside university decision-making structures.

Finally, activists pointed to organizational learning as an accomplishment. Some described how their group had become more savvy or more strategic over time, as the leaders learned the lay of the land or gained ideas for actions from other activists across the country. One activist's account captures this idea well: "We had a way of talking about our work where we said, even if you don't win the demands that you're fighting for, your work is still a success because you're still educating people, and you're still making forward movement. Every time you try, you learn something new, so the next time, you're a little bit stronger and a little bit better." Reframing losses as learning opportunities and any effort as progress helped buttress the morale of members to sustain the slow, difficult work of institutional change.

Of the five categories of accomplishments respondents cited, organizational power was the only category to vary by institutional type. Fewer student activists at private institutions than expected mentioned building up organizational power as a win or accomplishment.[1] Survey data showed that 26% of the respondents in private colleges and universities reported forming an activist-oriented club, compared to 37% of the respondents from public institutions of higher education. It is difficult to deduce why establishing new clubs was less common among and less salient to student activists at private institutions than their public school counterparts. It may be the case that private colleges and universities already had strong activist cultures and infrastructure. As one respondent from a small liberal arts college put it, "I don't think I could even name all the different types of activist clubs that we have here." For private school students whose campuses offered strong sup-

port for activism, wins or accomplishments may have been better indicated by changes to school policy or programming than by the establishment of a new club or the development of organizational power. Nonetheless, actual accounts of such changes did not vary by institutional type, and students in private schools were just as likely as their public school counterparts to identify changing school culture or policies as significant victories.

Promoting Cultural Shifts

When discussing their accomplishments, a handful of neoactivists offered caveats. One noted that "there are strides and pitfalls," and another said that it can be "hard to pinpoint black and white, wins and losses," but many felt a sense of momentum and expressed the belief that the culture of their institutions was slowly shifting as a result of their efforts. They described conversations that were happening now that weren't occurring a couple of years prior. They noted that issues that had not found receptive audiences a few years back were now attracting heightened interest. One neoactivist recalled, for example, how he had tried to raise the issue of the university's diversity requirement on the curriculum committee when he was a junior, and "it was kind of put to the bottom of the stack, but once the student protest happened . . . it went from being at the bottom of the agenda to something that's actively discussed with administration." Neoactivists also pointed to emails from university presidents and official university statements as reflections of a shifting culture. As one neoactivist put it, "People are starting to address these problems and recognizing that yes, racism is alive on our campus. If our white president is saying that in [his email], then something is clearly wrong." By surfacing dormant concerns, sparking overdue conversations, and holding administrators to account for indifferent or unjust policies and practices, many neoactivists felt they were succeeding in changing the fabric of their institutions.

While neoactivists gave credit for these cultural changes primarily to the heightened displays of activism on their campuses, they also ac-

knowledged that President Trump's election, rhetoric, and policies; the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement; and the fallout at Mizzou after dramatic shows of student solidarity all played a role in changing the culture of their campuses. In the wake of Trump's election, several activists reported incidences of hate crimes or racism on their campus as well as the rise of alt-right student groups. Particularly when such developments were met by weak or clumsy responses from the administration or faculty, student neoactivists felt compelled to mount vigorous responses to reassert their institution's values and remake its culture.

The Black Lives Matter movement, which surfaced on many campuses in the form of die-ins during the 2014–2016 school years, motivated many institutions to reexamine curricular requirements, campus iconography, building names, and faculty hiring and retention policies. As they watched what unfolded in Ferguson, read about BLM online, and learned more about the movement, student neoactivists became inspired to "do something," and several respondents in this study brought that enthusiasm and commitment with them to campus, where they directed it toward institutional practices and policies.

Some students believed that Mizzou represented a seismic shift in the current higher-education landscape. The firing of both the University of Missouri president and the university system's chancellor following the football team's decision to boycott their games and stand in solidarity with the fasting Jonathan Butler served as a potent example of the power of student activists to effect change, emboldening them and humbling administrators. Students on several campuses believed that administrators became more willing to meet with them and engage in conversations because Mizzou demonstrated how effectively student neoactivists could leverage university leaders' jobs, the university's finances, and its reputation, imperiling applications, enrollments, and rankings if their concerns went unacknowledged.

Although college campuses are sometimes referred to as bubbles or enclaves isolated from the "real world," the boundaries between campuses and US society are actually quite porous. Campuses are not immune from broader cultural changes transpiring in society. For example, the national spike in hate crimes reported in 2016 was reflected on

college campuses, which saw an increase of 25% in reported hate crimes, according to federal Department of Education data (Bauman, 2018).

Just as what occurs in society filters into college campuses and shapes what goes on inside the institution, so do places of higher education influence and shape society through research, expert analysis, and their examples as social microcosms and places of social experimentation. Student activists use their universities as social laboratories in which to practice bringing about the kind of society they want to live in by attempting to change the culture of their universities. Sam, introduced in chapter 2, reflected, "We're figuring things out, and we're trying, and I think it's better to be trying and failing or sometimes winning in this experimental space than just not trying at all." Another white, middle-class respondent who did not subscribe to gender binaries shared, "What I think student activism on my campus at least did so well is that it created a new set of cultural norms, a whole counterculture that you could completely absorb yourself into and that had its own definition of what's right and what's wrong and what you need to be working on and spending your life doing. [We were] creating a counterculture that is less harmful than mainstream society's culture, but also isn't replicating some of those same oppressions or still making people not fully able to be themselves." As they gain experience building and sustaining intentionally antioppressive communities or cultures, like this one, neo-activists deepen their own understanding about what is possible and ground their challenge to mainstream societal or institutional culture in a strong, viable alternative.

Securing Policy Change

Media accounts of student activism document the activists' impact by pointing to changes they have won to institutional practices and policies, such as the establishment of new programs or curricular requirements, the renaming of buildings, and the allocation of funds to specific initiatives. As seen earlier, the student activists' own accounts of their accomplishments are more nuanced and include wins that might be less visible and less dramatic. Nonetheless, respondents also include policy

changes among their wins. These policy wins range in scope from the institutional to the state level. Below, I list some of the institutional wins the student neoactivists named in this category:

- Convincing an all-women's college to accept transgender women and agender students
- Changing reporting procedures and hearing processes for survivors of sexual assault to ensure their safety and well-being; providing survivors with greater resources and supports, including leave of absence options; changing Title IX pamphlets to "be more inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community"
- Mobilizing workers on campus to vote down an unfair contract offered by the university; securing better working conditions for campus laborers, including reporting hours
- Improving the campus environment, including painting a mural and installing better lighting in a tunnel used by students with disabilities; remodeling a break room for campus workers; establishing a multifaith prayer room for students' use; and converting bathrooms in dormitories, libraries, and other buildings on campus from gender specific to gender neutral
- Establishing a Black resource center on campus
- Banning the use of plastic bags in campus stores; implementing a new composting and food waste program
- Revamping the diversity requirement to ensure a less tokenist approach
- Establishing new policies around hiring of outside contractors to provide campus security and ensuring racial sensitivity training for all staff

In addition to securing changes to campus practices and policies, several student neoactivists claimed credit for their contributions to state-level policy victories. These wins included the expansion of Medicaid across one state and the legalization of marijuana in another. One neoactivist in a midwestern state said, "Thanks to our activism, we were able to get a bill passed in Congress that increased state mental health funding." She continued, "We had phone trees set up. We emailed all kinds of

people. We had petitions. . . . Letting students know the reality of the bill and why it's important and encouraging them to call. And this was before calling senators and reps became trendy postelection. So you know, [we were] both appealing to the importance of civic engagement and the applicability of mental health issues for everybody. And we got that passed!" This feeling of achievement was echoed by many other respondents.

Neoactivists took pride not only in helping secure the passage of pending legislation but also in helping defeat certain measures, such as the repeal of Obamacare. One neoactivist, for example, described her work fighting against a Stand Your Ground bill in her state, which included a provision to allow concealed carry on college campuses. Beyond mobilizing her peers to make phone calls to state representatives, she conducted research and became emotionally and intellectually invested in the cause, as she devoted many hours to advocacy.

> I went in pretty deep, just kind of learning about the issue and calling all the senators and understanding why they think the way they think. That's really helped with sociology and anthropology classes, let me tell you. Nothing like talking to privileged white men about the impacts of guns on women and people of color. Fun little fact: the only thing that kind of got through to them was when I talked to them about sexual assault. Literally, the only time I got a response was when I talked about how I was sexually assaulted and how much worse that would have been with a gun. . . . Nothing like rehashing mental anguish to make a senator understand that you shouldn't let drunk teenagers have guns! But they actually got rid of that part of the bill, so that was actually a success.

The above quotation offers a clear illustration of the intersections among the affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions of this work. Engaging in the effort to defeat the bill required considerable emotional labor, time, and thought on the part of the activist. It also resulted in concrete benefits (helped inform her classes) and policy outcomes (a key provision was dropped from the bill). This example serves as a reminder of the power of activism to change hearts and minds on the way to effecting policy change.

Perceptions of Effectiveness

On average, the respondents indicated that their activism had been moderately effective (mean of 2.89 on a five-point scale). While one fifth of the survey respondents felt their activism had been very or extremely effective to date, only 5% felt their activism had been not at all effective. The vast majority (75%) indicated that their activism had been slightly or moderately effective. There were no statistically significant differences in respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of their activism by institutional type (public or private), community (urban, suburban, or rural), or regional location. Additionally, the neoactivists and non-neoactivists did not differ significantly in their ratings of their overall effectiveness.

One respondent who rated her activism as "moderately" effective elaborated, "We've had the largest march in Baton Rouge's history, we've had meetings with our university president, we've taken down Confederate flags legally, and we've integrated a very unrepresentative student government. However there is still much to be done." Another explained, "There is always room to grow," and a third, who ranked her activism as "slightly effective," stated that even though she had been told by peers that her work has made a difference, her desired goals are "probably out of reach." Most of the neoactivists in this study situated the "concrete changes" they had made within the context of the broader social change objectives they sought, balancing feelings of accomplishment with ambitions for even greater institutional and societal improvement.

Campaigns and Strategies

Although the accomplishments discussed earlier, whether they were "major wins" or "little victories," helped reinforce the neoactivists' feelings of agency and generate a sense of momentum, most participants in this study understood their work as incomplete. Most had not yet achieved the victories they intended, whether at their schools or in society. In this section, I consider their works in progress, the campaigns they were pursuing, and the goals they were setting. I then examine the

strategies they used as part of these campaigns to further illuminate what they actually do as neoactivists.

Campaigns and Causes

As noted in chapter 1, most of the neoactivists in this study pursued multiple issues and causes through their activism. Only 10% of respondents described themselves as single-issue-area activists. In fact, more than half of the respondents (52%) directed their activism toward seven or more issues. Racial justice (72%), gender equality (69%), and LGBTQIA rights (66%) stood as the most common causes (table 5.1). Slightly less than half of the activists (45%) focused their activism only on societal issues or public policy, rather than campus-based practices and policies. Among those who were involved in inward-facing activism, or campus-based activism, sexual harassment and assault were the most common issues, followed by student rights, tuition costs, campus policing, institutional investments, and curricular concerns.

The majority of inward-facing activists called for more resources and supports to be directed toward marginalized student groups, including victims of sexual assault, students of color, immigrant and undocumented students, LGBTQIA students, and low-income students. For example, one respondent described "pushing the university to have better resources and policies for survivors of sexual violence." Another described "going to campus administration and talking about the importance of having things like inclusive consent workshops and working with our health promotion director on creating consent workshops specifically targeted to the LGBT community on campus." Respondents at various colleges raised the issue of student homelessness and hunger. One discussed an effort to establish "a food pantry and a clothing closet for students who can't afford clothing, and having a textbook exchange of some sort. . . . In those realms of student homelessness and student food insecurity, just financial security and emergency housing and things like that—I would love to see more resources for that on campus." Several neoactivists pursued campaigns related to increasing counseling services and mental health supports on campus.

Table 5.1. Percentage of Survey Respondents Engaged in Specific Issue Areas

Issue Area	Respondents Engaged (%) ($N = 235$)
Racial justice	72
Gender equity	69
LGBTQIA rights	66
Human rights	60
Sexual assault	55
Reproductive rights	52
Economic justice	50
Climate justice	47
Educational equity	44
Student rights	40
Immigrant rights	40
Criminal justice	35
Indigenous rights	30
Gun control	24
Other	16
Right to life	12

In addition to supporting students, a handful of neoactivists on different campuses focused their efforts on university labor. One neoactivist explained, "We work with workers on campus to fight for their rights. Recently we've been trying to get them a union contract, with better concessions, increased wages, better benefits, language access because there's a lot of workers here who don't speak English as their first language and that's a really big barrier at the university for workers." On another campus, neoactivists took up the issue of affordable housing and tenants' rights in their town, recognizing that students living in the local community have displaced many of the people who do custodial work for the university.

While some activists called for entirely new investments or the establishment of new practices, such as sustainability initiatives and green building, others decried existing university decisions and fought to end particular policies and practices. On one campus, students took action when the school invited border control representatives to be part of a nonprofit fair. On another campus, students organized when they learned that inmates of the state prison make the furniture for the residence halls; they believed their university was complicit in what they felt was

"basically slave labor." Another neoactivist described the student protests that ensued when students learned their university "decided to take money" from the company that had made the Dakota Access Pipeline. Several neoactivists described "endowment activism and trying to get [the University's] endowment out of bad things and into good things," including divestment from fossil fuels, private prisons, and companies that profit from Israel's occupation of Palestine. One campaign targeted the university's indigenous mascot, which the students felt had been culturally appropriated.

In several cases, students launched campaigns in response to the ways in which policies enacted by the Trump administration were set to affect their campuses. They staged protests around the travel ban, which would impact international students and professors; the termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which would affect undocumented students; and Betsy DeVos's "rollback" of Title IX policies, which would affect how sexual assault cases would be handled on campus. These neoactivists identified the intersection between public policy and their institutions of higher education, whether public or private, and they pressured their colleges to defy federal policy. They called for their campuses to become sanctuaries for people fearing deportation under the ICE raids and crackdowns, and they pressed their university presidents to issue statements condemning the Trump administration's rhetoric and agenda.

Strictly outward-facing campaigns focused on hot topics in the public sphere. On the left, these issues included protecting voter rights, promoting species equality and animal rights, fighting against settler colonialism, and advancing environmental justice, among other issues. One student described her work to secure "universal in-home care for seniors and folks with disabilities . . . so [they] can age at home with dignity and the state would pay for it." On the right, respondents pursued campaigns related to protecting Second Amendment rights, promoting conservativism, and ending abortion. One activist, who was something of an outlier in terms of issue area, discussed supporting Republican candidates and conservative legislation in general. Another respondent described his concerns as "the exact opposite of all of the sjw [social justice warrior]

activism: mainly focusing on prodeportation, progun rights, more policing, and procolonialism." Although most of our respondents would likely consider themselves social justice warriors, this respondent stood as a reminder that no political party or ideology lays sole claim to activism.

The most popular causes in our study attracted students from all backgrounds, but more low-income students and fewer middle-class students than expected were invested in economic justice, education equity, and criminal justice reform, causes that might be more immediately relevant to the lives of low-income students than their middle-class counterparts. Lower-income student activists also embraced significantly more causes than their middle-class counterparts, with a mean of 8.6, compared to 6.8.[2] Although this finding does not explain the high number of causes embraced by wealthy student activists, there was a significant correlation between the number of causes one took up and the number of vulnerable identities one held, with respect to race, class, sexuality, and gender identity.[3] In addition to racial justice, more students of color fought for "students' rights" than their white counterparts,[4] and more directed their activism inward to address campus policies and practices, demonstrating engagement with immediate concerns that directly impact their lives.

Strategies, Tools, and Tactics

Mirroring the variety in the issue areas and campaign topics, activists' strategies ranged as well. Sixty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they had participated in three or more forms of activism over the past year. Only 13% of self-identifying student activists had used a single strategy in their activism over the 2016–2017 school year. Most respondents (82%) had engaged in a protest, march, or direct action; and online campaigns and letter writing or petitioning tied for second most common strategies, each employed by 61% of the sample (table 5.2). Only one third of the activists described engaging in creative activity, such as street theatre, poetry slams, or the production of digital content, but those who did expressed particular pride in their actions. On one campus, activists delivered a report card to their university administra-

Table 5.2. Percentage of Survey Respondents Engaged in Specific Forms of Activism

Strategy	Respondents Engaged (%) ($N = 235$)
Protest, rally, march, demonstration	82
Letter writing or petition	61
Online campaign	61
Lobbying or meeting with policy makers	35
Creative action	33
Walkout	22
Sit-in or die-in	19

tors, "saying in these ways, according to your mission, you have failed and not lived up to your mission, which is a very blatant way of saying that we as students don't think you're doing what needs to be done." On another campus, activists protesting a racist campus culture donned foul-weather gear and brought mops and bubbles to the center of campus, where they scrubbed down the school mascot statue, to symbolize the need to "clean up the campus." Off campus, activists organized community concerts around particular themes, such as marijuana legislation. Animal rights activists staged creative disruptions in grocery stores, restaurants, and minor league baseball games.

Students' use of most of these strategies did not vary significantly according to their socioeconomic status or race. Low-income student activists were more likely to engage in walkouts and creative actions than their middle-class counterparts (figure 5.1).[5] More white students than expected engaged in letter writing and online activism, which constitute less immediate and dramatic forms of activism, while more students of color than expected participated in sit-ins, a highly charged form of activism with a rich tradition in the Black community.[6]

Analyses revealed few statistically significant differences in strategy use by institutional contexts. Online activism was more common than expected among students attending urban schools and less common than expected among students attending school in rural locations.[7] In the East and Midwest, more students than expected reported using protest strategies, while the reverse was true of students in the South and West.[8] Still, across all regions, protests were the most common

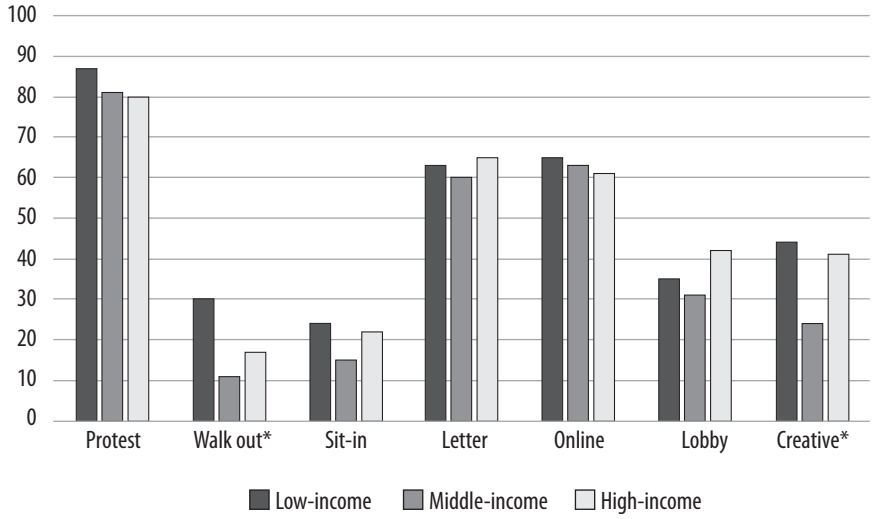


Figure 5.1. Strategy Use by Socioeconomic Status. *Note:* * $p \leq .05$.

strategy. There were no differences in strategy use by school type, public or private.

In addition to the strategies listed in table 5.2, interview respondents identified various forms of outreach and mobilization they used. These strategies included techniques to promote their organization or club, such as tabling, "pamphleting," leafletting, creating clever displays around campus, writing editorials in the campus newspaper, and holding events. The events typically encompassed educational efforts, such as teach-ins, book groups, crash courses in a particular topic, forums, panels, speaker series, and film screenings as well as instances of direct action, such as vigils, rallies, and letter drops. In some cases, activists used neoliberal tools such as commercial products (T-shirts, laptop stickers, yard signs) to publicize their campaigns. For example, one group promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts on their campus developed a logo and a slogan, "Get woke [College Nickname]," and then produced associated merchandise, including large banners, to disseminate their message about the need to combat racism, microaggressions, and sexism at the college.

The activists also explained that much of their time was spent orga-

nizing. While a significant portion of this work entailed "trust building and relationship building," it also involved conducting research, strategizing, building campaigns, planning actions, and "deliberating over" demands. On one campus, where administrators resisted activists' calls to change the university mascot from one that is "incredibly culturally appropriative" because of the cost of a rebranding effort, activists developed a tiered strategy. They first met with administrators and made an appeal to change the mascot. When that meeting went nowhere, they started a petition. Even before they presented the petition's results, expecting the university to "shut us down again," they set upon a compromise position that would involve instituting a mandatory course for all students on the culture of the indigenous population associated with the mascot. One activist recalled, "We can go back to the administration and be like, 'OK. You've shut us down twice, but how about as a compromise, we have a required course on [the indigenous group's] culture.' So far, campus administration has not shut us down a second time quite yet. So, I think we're waiting on that and then we'll bring that out." This strategy speaks to the activists' patience, deliberation, savvy, and willingness to compromise to secure short-term victories in the service of longer-term change. They understood that instituting a required course would slowly build student understanding of the inappropriateness of the mascot; such understanding, in turn, would engender greater student will to exert pressure on administrators to replace it.

In meeting with administrators or legislators, activists understood that framing and storytelling were particularly effective tactics. Several respondents talked about the power of getting classmates to share testimony or anecdotes. For example, one neoactivist commented, "I always like to present [the issue] to administration without any hard numbers, but I'll bring a student to talk about it. They respond pretty well to people's stories, which is something I was surprised by. So I'll assign somebody to present [their] side of the tale. . . . So it's just like finding, it's also knowing the student body well enough to [identify] somebody that I know that could talk about it pretty well." In framing issues, activists often connected their demands to the university's mission statement or core values. One activist explained, "Another thing we've used

has been using the university's mission statement as a Catholic and Jesuit school . . . using that as a framework for a lot of campaigns." Testimonials and framing helped activists persuade their target audience of the legitimacy and moral significance of their demands.

Networking and coalition building emerged as common strategies deployed by activists as well. They spent time building relationships with other activists on their own campuses and connecting with activists involved in the same causes or groups in other parts of the country. One activist explained that the formal "student activist network" she spent time forming on her campus offered a "structure through which student activist groups on campus can all support each other and [develop] a shared list of demands." Another discussed how coalitions can be useful to "spread responsibility, but it's also like numbers always help, especially when you're trying to negotiate." Cross-campus collaborations and connections proved powerful in sharing ideas and information as well as building a sense of solidarity and common cause. One activist described these networks as

> really helpful, because it's nice to hear from other students that were doing similar things that have been effective on [their] campuses, but also just to hear about differences and learn from them and think, "Oh! This could be a strategy that we use or maybe this . . . would not work on our own campuses." . . . It's been nice to have that show of support from different campuses and realize that we do have power in numbers, regardless of how different our schools may be in terms of their values or how the university is organized, or how the power manifests itself on campus. It's cool to come together because we're all students and we're all here trying to fight for the same cause.

National organizations with campus-based chapters had built-in structures to facilitate such networking; however, activists who were not involved in national organizations valued their connections with activists on other campuses as well and spent time nurturing these relationships.

Whether they were networking with activists on other campuses or advertising upcoming events and actions on their own campus, activists found social media to be a useful tool. The most commonly used plat-

form was Facebook; activists also mentioned using Google groups and Google docs, Facetime, Twitter, Groupme, Instagram, Change.org, and Tumblr to promote their activism, to mobilize people for actions, and to share resources and information. A majority of respondents described Facebook as particularly "helpful" and "useful," citing it as the "quickest" or "easiest" way to get the word out about their organization, events, or actions. A few activists did comment on the limits of social media, and several critiqued hashtag activism as a lazy and ineffective form of activism.

A final strategy some activists mentioned had to do with their everyday actions and how they live their lives. One respondent offered as an example her attempt to challenge a group of men who sat behind her at a women's basketball game for their sexist comments. Another described helping a stranger in distress one evening. Initiating conversations with friends and family members about issues of concern was a commonplace strategy deployed on a regular basis by many respondents. One activist explained that he had taken the Liberation Pledge as part of his activism. The pledge "basically has three main points. One of them is you publicly state [your commitment] to be vegan, and two is you publicly refuse to sit at any table where animals' bodies are being eaten. And then the third point is that you tell people about it." Other everyday actions that constituted activism including recycling, using public transportation, conserving energy and minimizing waste, conscious boycotting and "buy-cotting," and "practicing kindness."

Challenges and Setbacks

When students adopt identities as activists, they commit themselves to a long and challenging road. They understand that the work will not be easy, and victories may be "few and far between." As one activist explained, "It's not like I'm fighting for them to paint something blue." The campaigns that the activists take on deal with complex, "longer-term, systemic issues." Accordingly, the activists brace themselves for a tough haul, expecting obstacles and setbacks. As one respondent put it, "If the campus was just going to do whatever we told them to do, then

I wouldn't have to be an activist." Nonetheless, the range of challenges the student activists reported encountering was great, and there were few widespread commonalities in the obstacles or difficulties they named.

When asked what, if any, challenges and setbacks they had faced, a couple of activists cited the difficulty of engaging their peers. On some campuses, activists felt student apathy keenly. One respondent described his campus's "earbud culture," in which students kept themselves tethered to their phones, thereby insulating themselves from having to interact with others and learn about issues on campus or in society. Whether such seeming indifference was, as one activist suggested, an act of willful ignorance on the part of students who refused to acknowledge their complicity in a system that privileged them at the expense of others or a sign that students were just "super busy," the challenge of getting their peers to care stymied some activists. Some respondents chalked up low participation to their particular issue rather than the students' capacity to engage in it. A neoactivist involved in mental health work, for example, felt that the stigma around the topic impeded her efforts to get "turnout" at our meetings. She continued, "Another major setback for me is getting people to open up and talk about it, because most people tend to shy away from the issue or they don't know how. So that can be difficult." The activists in the study understood that activism required difficult, sometimes uncomfortable conversations, a willingness to take risks, and a readiness to be vulnerable, but helping other students feel comfortable with such discomfort proved challenging for some respondents.

For other respondents, getting people "in the door" was less of a problem than sustaining engagement and building a leadership pipeline. One respondent described how difficult it can be to "keep the ball rolling and keep people focused. . . . Everyone's very passionate, but sometimes you can feel the passion at the beginning and then after a while, it kind of gets exhausting or tiresome and people just have others things to do." Another explained that while "standing outside and chanting" can be fun and exciting for students, "the follow-up part is a little more boring," and inspiring people to remain involved can be tricky. Activists cited various threats to their momentum, including "demon-

stration fatigue," difficult internal dynamics, turf wars "or the illusion of conflict" with other activist groups on campus, and the disruptiveness of school breaks. Inexperience also stalled some efforts. As one respondent explained, "I had never done it—nobody's ever done it before." Another echoed, "I'd never done anything like this before." Reflecting on the long list of demands his group had crafted and the energy they expended in their "massive push" to get their demands met, he continued, "I didn't have the experience to know there's a long-term campaign; we should go steady and pick and choose what we want to accomplish first. I think for the group as a whole, it was just getting caught up in this excitement all at once, and it was not really like planning ahead consciously, as we should have." He felt that the group's inexperience prevented it from conceiving of its campaign as a long-term, multiyear process; therefore, when the university explained that it could not immediately accede to and implement all of the group's demands, the members felt that they had failed. Had they set up their campaign as a series of incremental wins to be achieved over time, they might have enjoyed staggered successes instead of the feeling of overwhelming defeat.

A handful of respondents discussed the difficulties of engaging a recalcitrant administration and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles. Trying to set up meetings with a "completely unresponsive" president and provost felt "really frustrating" for one activist; "meeting with administration that really don't care" was the greatest setback for another. One activist worried that she was being played by her administration. She explained that while she couldn't think of anything she had presented that had been immediately shut down by administrators, she would hear "we're in conversation about this, and it's gonna take more time." She believed that this response "might've just been administration trying to placate me." Another activist complained that administrators on his campus would "cover up" big issues and leave activists in the dark. He found the lack of "transparency between students and administrators" problematic. Neoactivists also had difficulty reaching administrators whose power and privilege prevented them from fully understanding the perspectives of the more marginalized. For example, one neoactivist noted that even though her university president was "pretty inclusive,

he is also a cis-gender, straight, old, rich white man, and so a lot of the problems that we bring to him and present as problems, he doesn't really see in the same way. And that's been a major setback." Convincing people in privileged positions of the need for change, whether they are administrators with decision-making authority or fellow students who could help apply pressure, stood as a significant challenge for several student activists.

Discussing challenges to their activism, two respondents described how administrators used their school's status as a public institution as a barrier to progress. One acknowledged, "Even if I would like to take a positive view of them, they're embattled all the time by the regents, and also since this is a pretty conservative state, there's always budget crunch. So, [education]'s the first to be under attack. They have a certain responsibility towards defending themselves, and a lot of that means not accounting to the demands of these groups." This respondent understood that to meet the activists' demands, the institution would have to invest new resources or reallocate existing funding. In a context of already tight budgets and public distrust of university spending, institutional administrators may be loath to make controversial fiscal decisions, which might inspire further calls to slash higher-education budgets. Another respondent felt that administrators at her institution used its public standing for "multiple cop-outs." She explained,

> At private institutions, you set the group norms, and everyone's just required to follow them 'cause that's what a private institution looks like. But, as a public institution you also are under the jurisdiction of the government. And so that's immediately difficult. . . . They keep on copping out because they keep saying they can't do some things because we're a public institution. A lot of the administrators who don't care just push that as the problem. And so for us a setback has just continuously been that they defer their own agency and power to the larger institution, which is the government in this case.

Unlike the prior respondent who voiced some sympathy for her school's dependence on public funds, this respondent did not view her administrator's use of its government-controlled status as a legitimate excuse.

She seemed to believe that public institutions bore a responsibility to be responsive to public needs, and that government should function to protect vulnerable populations, not to shore up its own power, neglect its constituents' needs, and stymie change.

Beyond the general lack of governmental support for higher education, the specific deleterious impact of the Trump administration was cited as a setback or challenge by many activists. A few respondents discussed how deflated and defeated they felt by Trump's election and subsequent policy agenda. "Feeling like you have to fight the same battle that you've already fought and practically won all over again in the new era of this glorious presidency—that's been a setback," said one student neoactivist. Another recalled, "Last year, when Trump was elected, it was like disaster after disaster after disaster happening in the real world. And when that's happening and you're like spending your time sitting in a statistics class, you're like, 'Oh my god! Why am I wasting my time in this class right now when the world is falling apart?' " Although none of the students in our study became activists because of Trump, the pace and urgency of their activism quickened under his leadership, as he rolled back Obama-era advances, including Title IX protections for victims of sexual assault, the DACA program, the injunction against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the signing of the Paris Climate Accord.

In addition to Trump's policies presenting a significant challenge, student neoactivists highlighted the license he appeared to give to anti-immigrant, antiqueer white supremacists to voice their beliefs. One respondent explained, "In the wake of Trump being elected, a lot of people feel a lot more motivated to spread hate. That's been a setback because we were making so much progress, and it seems overall people were becoming more inclusive, and really it was just all of the shitty people in society had just been quiet for eight years, and now they are all open to say whatever the heck they want to say." A few respondents pointed to incidents of racism or white supremacy on their campuses and the rise of "alt-right, practically KKK student groups" as a direct result of the Trump presidency. They knew it was important to push back on these developments, but they were deeply saddened that they had to do so in the first place.

Finally, personal challenges and setbacks loomed large for a couple of respondents. Schoolwork and activism sometimes stood in conflict with one another, as the earlier quote about the statistics class suggests. One neoactivist put it this way: "As students, there are obligations that we have to meet. There are midterms that we have to do and finals and papers and homework, and so it can be really difficult when you know that you have a march coming up or a protest coming up, but you have midterms to study for, and so you can't go and you can't be as active as you would want. It's not a huge setback, but sometimes it's a setback—just not being able to be as active as you might want." In addition to the time demands and the challenge of finding a way to either balance or prioritize their various obligations, several respondents faced the challenge of the emotional labor of activism. For example, one neoactivist described how devastating it felt to devote considerable time and care to organizing a silent Black Lives Matter protest only to have it attacked by other classmates, "videoing on Snapchat and yelling profanities while we are standing. This is a silent protest, by the way. We are quiet, holding up signs. So I feel like emotionally, these types of things have taken a toll on me." Though felt internally, the emotional challenges student activists described were almost always triggered by real-world experiences and by the actions and words, that is, the *behaviors*, of others. While it certainly has affective and cognitive dimensions, at its most basic level, activism is a behavioral response to other people's choices and behavior.

The Behavioral Dimension of Activism

Activism is about doing. Although the most potent forms of activism are informed by thought and infused with emotion, by themselves thought and emotion do not amount to activism. Just as the word itself includes *act*, activism presumes action. These actions can be spontaneous (impromptu protests in airports following President Trump's travel ban) or meticulously planned. They can be bold and dramatic (a sit-in at the university president's office) or more understated (a quiet conversation

with a peer). More often than not, activists practice a wide repertoire of strategies; however, direct action is both the most commonly enacted and the most conventionally understood form of activism.

I conclude with an account of one campaign that illustrates how student neoactivists use a range of strategies not just to change hearts and minds, build organizational power, promote cultural shifts within their institution, and win policy changes but also to challenge the neoliberal university and neoliberalism itself. Founded in 1997, United Students against Sweatshops (USAS) has become a powerful watchdog group, advocating for workers' rights and against unjust labor practices, with chapters or "affiliated locals" on more than 150 campuses. In 2000, USAS established the Workers' Rights Consortium (WRC), an independent monitoring body that investigates conditions in factories that produce apparel for universities and colleges, issues reports, and provides assistance to workers who report labor abuses. When in 2015, following reports of a workers' strike, Nike refused to permit WRC inspectors access to one of its factories in Vietnam, USAS students on several campuses sounded the alarm. Bowing to pressure from university administrators, who were themselves pressured by USAS students, Nike finally agreed to grant partial access to WRC monitors. The WRC ended up producing a damning report, detailing inhumane conditions and worker exploitation at the factory.

USAS students quickly mobilized in response, launching a "Just Cut It" campaign on more than 25 campuses to pressure their universities to sever their contracts with Nike. At Georgetown University, student leaders orchestrated a series of actions to pressure their administration to enforce contract terms with Nike or drop the contract entirely. During the fall of 2016, after holding several fruitless meetings with administrators and writing a letter to a top institutional official, the students escalated their protests: "first a three-day barefoot protest, then a full day of jamming the phone lines of the president's office, then holding a party in president DeGioia's office, to congratulate him on his lukewarm commitment to workers' rights, complete with a cake" (Zager, Solis, & Adjroud, 2017). Next, in the final weeks of the semes-

ter, they launched a 35 hour sit-in at the president's office, which resulted in disciplinary sanctions for the individual students as well as the club, including the loss of control over their budget.

The student occupation ended, however, with a commitment from administrators to hold new discussions and meetings with the students. In these meetings, which were mediated by professors, university officials eventually agreed not to renew Nike's contract unless Nike agreed to abide by the university's code of conduct and allow the WRC full access to its facilities. When Nike refused to oblige, Georgetown dropped the contract. As an independent mediator worked for more than eight months to broker a new licensing agreement between the university and Nike, the USAS students remained vigilant. During the summer of 2017, they participated in a Global Day of Action against Nike, protesting outside Nike's flagship store in Georgetown. Similar protests occurred on this day in 25 cities and 12 countries. When Nike finally agreed to Georgetown University's stipulations in August of 2017, USAS students claimed an important victory. An article in the *Nation* trumpeted their success: "For the first time ever, Nike signed a contract that ensures full, independent access for the Worker Rights Consortium—and it happened because of students" (Zager et al., 2017). On other campuses, including Rutgers University, University of California, Berkeley, University of Washington, Cornell University, Gonzaga University, Villanova University, Boston University, and Northeastern University, USAS students also claimed victories, as Nike contracts were either discontinued or dramatically renegotiated.

As an organization, USAS exemplifies neoactivism. Its vision statement reads: "We envision a world in which society and human relationships are organized cooperatively, not competitively. We struggle towards a world in which all people live in freedom from oppression, in which people are valued as whole human beings rather than exploited in a quest for productivity and profits." Although the organization does not explicitly reference neoliberalism in its promotional materials or on its website, it advances a vision of justice that pushes directly against the individualistic, competitive, and capitalistic tenets of neoliberalism. Its organizing philosophy is rooted in the principles of solidarity, grass-

roots democracy, pluralism, and collective liberation. In explaining these values, the organization emphasizes the intersectionality of both social justice struggles and activist identities: "USAS centers the intersection of many related struggles for social, racial, economic, and gender justice following the idea of collective liberation. . . . Collective liberation prioritize[s] the mentorship and leadership development of students of color, working class students, women, transgender, queer and differently-abled students. We strive to build deep relationships with other grassroots movements because we believe the labor movement is part of broader struggle for global justice." Echoing these ideals, a sophomore USAS member at Georgetown explained, "I do this work because I know my liberation is inherently tied to those sewing my apparel. I will not be free until we are all free" (Zager et al., 2017).

USAS students recognize the important financial stake that both the university and multinational corporations like Nike have in the apparel supply chain. By threatening boycotts, by exposing their school's complicity in labor abuses, and by calling into question the university's commitment to its own mission statement and values, student neoactivists worked to leverage the university's power to flip the neoliberal script and put people over profits. At Georgetown, students planned actions "to hurt the corporation's bottom line." They invoked "the Jesuit tenet of 'men and women for others' that the Georgetown administration constantly touts [to demand that] the university support its high-minded rhetoric with genuine policy." And they refused to be cowed by disciplinary sanctions. As a USAS organizer at Gonzaga University put it, "It's students that hold administrations accountable in putting the interests of workers and student voice over the profit that is offered by the corporations that universities contract with" (Estoque, 2018). As student activists expose the neoliberal university's enmeshment in money-making deals that serve private corporate interests at the expense of vulnerable people, they not only unmask its hypocrisy but also challenge it to a higher purpose, often reflected in its mission statement, to serve the public good.

This chapter reveals that by engaging a range of causes and using a variety of strategies, student activists accomplish a host of valued out-

comes through their activism, despite facing a wide set of challenges. As they pursue the work of activism, that is, hold events, build up their organizational power, change hearts and minds, promote cultural shifts, effect policy change, and advance alternatives to neoliberalism, they challenge and change their institutions. They accomplish these ends even when their neoactivism is outward facing and not directly targeting their own institutions. Whether they direct their neoactivist efforts toward their own university's or college's policies and practices or use their campuses as critical fronts in broader social change campaigns, they challenge their campuses to become emblematic of the kind of society they hope to one day steward as adults.

Conclusion

In a 2016 episode of the television series *Madam Secretary*, the secretary of state takes her daughter on a college visit (Hall, Costello, & Cappiello, 2016). While on a campus tour, the secretary, her daughter, and their entourage are confronted by a group of student activists, protesting a US mining company's "rapacious plunder of Chilean natural resources." The attempt by the student activists to speak truth to power ends abruptly when one of the activists deploys a confetti bomb. Throughout the episode, the president's chief of staff and the secretary of state's staff belittle and ridicule the activists, referring to them as "infants," "idiot protestors," "diaper-wearing toddlers on campus," "college babies," "screamers," and "a teeming horde." At one point, the activists march around campus in Chilean ponchos in a show of solidarity, much to the dismay of one of the secretary of state's daughters. Toward the end of the episode, the secretary demonstrates her diplomatic prowess by humiliating the lead organizer in front of his parents, with whom she has initiated a Skype call. His parents question whether the money they are spending for their son to get an education is "money well spent" and threaten to make him pay his own tuition if he doesn't stop acting like "he's two [years old]" (Hull, 2016).

Although the secretary of state comes to the young man's defense, arguing that "young people rising up against abuse of power has been

a force for change many times in this country," the episode largely puts forward an image of student activists as childish. It portrays them as disrespectful and misguided, in need of a "total smackdown" from a wiser, more skilled political actor. This is one way that the mainstream media typically frames college student activists: as immature and inappropriate. It is also common for the media to portray student activists as violent, dangerous, and unruly (especially when they are youth of color) or, more romantically, as idealists, fearlessly (and naively) championing social justice. With equal measures of condescension and disdain, student activists are castigated as either "snowflakes," who are too fragile to brook controversy or personal affronts, or "social justice warriors," who are too bullheaded and concerned with activist performativity to engage in productive dialogue. As different as they may be, these default depictions of student activists are equally problematic and reductionist.

This book has moved beyond simple stereotypes and convenient caricatures to examine the nuanced motives and complex experiences of real-life, present-day college student activists, from their own perspectives. It set out to address four central questions: who are the current college and university student activists; when, how, and why did they become activists; what do they do as activists; and what impact have they had on their campuses and beyond? In this conclusion, I synthesize the answers to these questions that our data generated and draw out implications for theory, further research, and practice and policy in higher education.

The Sociopolitical Development of Neoactivists

In our sample of "new student activists," the overwhelming majority represented neoactivists. I argue that neoactivists are distinguished by how intentionally they connect their efforts to past struggles, their critical consciousness and attention to power dynamics, their intersectional perspective, and the challenge they mount to neoliberalism. Other scholars have also noted some of these features of contemporary youth

activism. For example, Robert Rhoads (2016) has observed that some of the trends in student activism today extend the work and frames of 1990s-era activists, who themselves drew on and worked to advance the ideals of the Civil Rights movement. He argues that to challenge oppression and marginality, activists must always attend to and come "to terms with history and culture" (p. 190). Scholars have also noted the centrality of intersectionality to much of student activism today (Conner & Rosen, 2016; Fernández et al., 2018; Linder & Rodriguez, 2012; Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015) and paid considerable attention to the construct of critical consciousness (Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Kezar, 2010). Finally, a handful of scholars have explored contemporary student activists' efforts to "de-neoliberalize the university" (Fernández et al., 2018, p. 604; see also Cole & Heinecke, 2018; Ferguson, 2017; Karter, Robbins, & McInenery, 2019). My arguments build on this scholarship by considering how all four of these features work in tandem to set neoactivists apart both from others within the new student activist sphere and from their predecessors.

The four features of neoactivism—historicity, criticality, intersectionality, and antineoliberalism—characterize the worldview and social analysis that neoactivists advance. This analysis guides their activist practice: the tools and tactics they take up as well as the ways they engage and interact with one another. At the same time, this analysis develops alongside and from action. This study's findings reveal that active experimentation is a key part of the turn toward activism. Whether they became activists in high school or college, most of the neoactivists in this study engaged in various forms of activism before they began to see themselves as activists.

I find that neoactivists develop their worldview and their courage to act on it through various opportunity structures embedded within the larger structures of the high school and college learning environments. These meso-level opportunity structures include clubs and student groups, high school classrooms that support student voice, and college courses that address social issues. Each of these opportunity structures supports dialogue, knowledge accumulation, critical reflec-

tion, and active experimentation. In addition, I found that texts, whether assigned by a teacher, recommended by a friend, or discovered online, can play a powerful role in shaping an activist identity.

If activism is the goal of sociopolitical development (SPD), and if activism is understood as predicated on collective action, then SPD is best understood as a social process rather than an individual psychological process. Because the opportunity structures that appear to support SPD depend on exchanges with other people and joint work, peers emerge as instrumental actors in the SPD process. Peers may not incite what I call the turn toward activism, but they certainly help to further it, deepening the activist's commitment to an activist identity, helping sharpen one another's worldview, and supporting one another in undertaking the emotionally difficult work of activism.

Watts and his colleagues have long argued that critical consciousness, or an analysis of power and authority, is central to SPD (Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999; Watts & Guessous, 2006). To the extent that critical consciousness develops through interaction—through discussion, reading, and collective reflection—social or group-based opportunity structures, whether classes, clubs, or even online networks, do more than simply moderate the relationship between one's worldview and societal involvement. They are foundational to SPD. They are the spaces where sociopolitical understandings germinate and where experiments in new ways of acting in and on the world begin.

Understanding action as a collective rather than an individual construct and as part of an ongoing developmental process, as opposed to the fixed outcome of SPD, helps reframe SPD from a one-way, individual-based process to a more dynamic, situated, reciprocal, and lifelong one. In such a framing, opportunity structures develop activists, and they are developed by activists. The structures themselves change because of the analyses and practices activists bring to bear on them. A bidirectional, not unidirectional, arrow runs between opportunity structures and the worldview–societal involvement axis of collective SPD.

Furthermore, the activists' actions reach beyond the opportunity structures themselves to affect the larger systems in which these meso-level opportunity structures are situated, particularly at the university

level. SPD must therefore account for not just how individuals collectively change but also how the context in which they operate changes because of the actions they take. I pick up this analysis later when discussing the university–student activist dialectic, but I end here with a call for future theory and research to attend to the dynamism of SPD as a process of social change, not simply individual change. Such a reframe is not only more consistent with our data but also more in keeping with neoactivists' attention to relational interdependence. Individualistic developmental frameworks are better aligned with neoliberal ideologies, which seek to atomize individuals and treat them as autonomous actors who either avail themselves of the opportunities that exist to improve their lots in life or fail to do so. By contrast, viewing SPD as a collective process that aims toward social change helps clarify that a central developmental task for neoactivists is learning to recognize their socially situated selves. Part of their development as activists involves honoring history, relationships, and themselves and their peers as more than economic actors motivated by narrow self-interest.

Neoactivism and Social Change

As many neoactivists are quick to point out, history is replete with examples of students taking the lead in social movements. Why are students often such important movement actors? What is it about youth that makes them compelling and powerful change agents? Surely, the answers have something to do with their combination of idealism and impatience, their willingness to take risks and their unwillingness to accept tired adult excuses that "it is just the way things are." Creative, hopeful, and clear-eyed about the future they envision, they have yet to become inured to the status quo and beaten down by the forces that maintain it.

Student activists also are adept at parlaying into strengths factors that might make their efforts vulnerable—using their lack of life experience to shame adults for not having done better when they should have known better, for example; translating the limited time they have at university to effect change into feelings of greater urgency; and using

their coursework and jobs on campus as opportunities to complement and strengthen their activism, rather than seeing such responsibilities as competition for or distractions from their activism. Many student activists leverage this unique moment in their lives and the privileges, access, and resources the higher-education environment affords them to champion change both in and beyond their institutions.

Contemporary student activists bear many striking similarities to earlier generations of student activists. Like the student activists of today, the student activists of the past recognized linkages among various struggles, faced inward and outward, deployed the tools of their day, connected through national organizations, and encountered institutional and state resistance and even violence in response to their actions. Whether they were pushing for abolition or suffrage, civil rights or workers' rights, species equality or any number of progressive social issues, students' efforts serve as a reminder that when young people take part in social movements, the winds of change begin to shift. This is not to say that students always succeed in their explicit missions. Some student-led movements have fizzled, and others have provoked harsh government crackdowns and suppression. But before they fade, even the unsuccessful movements that students have joined and led succeed in stimulating important conversations and prompting consideration of alternatives to the status quo.

Today's status quo is defined by neoliberalism, both in the university and in the political economy beyond. Insofar as neoactivists advance a vision that counters neoliberal assumptions and ideals, they distinguish themselves within the broad sweep of student activism. They continue in the tradition of their predecessors, intentionally linking to and learning from earlier movements and student-led campaigns, but they also invent new tactics and tools to respond to and contest the dominant discourse of their day. Their activism is "neo" because it revives and revises earlier eras of activism and because it rebuts neoliberalism, offering what Rose Cole and Walter Heinecke (2018) call "a blueprint for a post-neoliberal higher education sector" (p. 14).

A college senior explained why neoactivism demands radical imagi-

nation and how one hallmark of neoactivism, the intersectional perspective, shapes such visioning:

> Collective action—the kind we see ongoing in the #BlackLivesMatter movement; campus sexual assault activism; and the Divest movement across the country—reminds us that intersectional feminism is not only about critique. It's also about imagination: about having the guts and the hope and the silliness to imagine a different world. A world where our lives are not dictated so painfully and rigidly by our genders and our sexualities and our races and our backgrounds and our bodies. A world where each and every one of us can not only survive, but can play. (Gattuso, 2015)

This neoactivist's vision for a playful, joyful future, in which individuals have opportunities to express their full selves and lead lives of dignity, requires a fundamental shift in the neoliberal political economy. As she argues for a "restructuring of the ways we consume, the ways we live our lives," she highlights the limits of an individualistic, consumer-focused, market-based society.

The vision neoactivists articulate for their institutions and society is decidedly antineoliberal. They value collaboration above competition and shared responsibility over self-interest. They see education as a public good rather than a private privilege, and they believe their institutions of higher education bear a social responsibility to those not only whom they educate but also who work on their campuses, live in their vicinity, and rely on them for new knowledge and new ways of knowing. They critique and reject the neoliberal university's impoverished understanding of itself as a workforce supplier and instead champion its democratic purposes. They regard as essential the social safety net and regulations that protect vulnerable people and the planet at the expense of profit. They see participatory democracy as the best means of addressing social problems and ensuring the social contract, and they articulate a social imaginary marked by inclusion and justice. One student neoactivist looked to the future, saying, "I am confident that, at least in the future, our leadership will begin to recognize and reflect the

values of us millennials. These values are inclusivity, equal opportunity, acceptance of differences, community building, and sustainability." Another respondent voiced her determination to "work to make a future where everyone has had the same opportunities, freedom, and rights that I have been privileged with." The neoactivists in this study held firm to a vision of a socially just, sustainable future.

Furthermore, the core elements of neoactivism—historicizing and critical intersectionality—combined with a practice that emphasizes self-care and collective care, directly rebut neoliberalism insofar as they foreground relationships and underscore the importance of historical, political, social, cultural, and economic contexts. By drawing connections across time periods, geographies, and peoples, neoactivists honor the ties that bind us to one another. Where neoliberalism seeks to decontextualize individuals and position them in competition with one another, neoactivism calls for a more interdependent understanding of institutions and society.

While this study offers some insight into how student neoactivists build and flex their power, to fully understand the role youth have played and continue to play in social change efforts, more research is needed. The literature on social movements has paid relatively scant attention to the contributions and leadership of youth.[1] It seems clear that generational change can foment social change, and it is indisputable that youth have played instrumental parts in many powerful social movements, but the roles of students and their universities in supporting these movements have been relatively undertheorized. This study takes steps in addressing that gap by explicating the contentious reciprocal relationship between the university and student activist, and by showing how this relationship can effect both personal and institutional change.

The Contentious Reciprocal Relationship between Student Activists and Their Universities

> While the university is what provided me with the education to think critically, I also kind of realize some of their shortcomings and the systems of oppression that they still sort of buy into. So when I see [that]

> . . . it just kinda springs me to be active and not just passive like I was for a good chunk of my life.

This respondent's account of her turn toward activism highlights how her university shaped her and how she now seeks to transform it. Reflected in this quotation, the contentious reciprocal relationship between the student activist and the institution of higher education involves efforts by each to challenge and change the other. These efforts often occur simultaneously rather than sequentially; however, I explain each of the four undertakings in turn below.

The findings of this study show that college changes the student activist. Through clubs, connections to other student activists, and coursework, students learn about social issues and themselves, refine their critical perspective and analysis, deepen their commitment to effecting change, and discover opportunities to act. One student activist reflected, "For me, it has been one of the most life-changing experiences. It has connected with what I am studying and everything I do as a college student. It has grown me in ways that I could not even have imagined when I first stepped on this campus."

Even students who come to college already seeing themselves as activists found that college changes the kind of activism they practice. One respondent, for example, reflected, "I think I always was an activist, but I was an introverted activist in the beginning, like coming up. . . . But now in college, I think that I've become a more vocal activist. I really blossomed into knowing what I wanted to fight for in college." While these changes may be a result of maturation, the activists themselves credited the people and opportunities they found in college with helping to bring about these transformations in their sociopolitical involvement: their commitment, behavior, and identities. Although little extant research has explored how contemporary student activists learn and develop within the college environment, that they do so has been well established (Biddix, 2014; Kezar, 2010; Kezar & Maxey, 2014; Rhoads, 2016; Revilla, 2004; Rhoads, Saenz, & Carducci, 2005; Rosas, 2010).

As they change, student activists challenge their institutions to reflect the values and understandings they have developed in their activist com-

munities. For the neoactivists, these values are progressive, democratic, and equity oriented. Sometimes this challenge takes the form of directly confronting administrators to demand new programs, initiatives, or investments or changes to existing policy or practice. It may mean challenging the perspectives of those in positions of power who have a hard time seeing or sympathizing with the perspectives of those who experience oppression, microagressions, and exclusion on campus. Other times, the challenge involves mobilizing various constituents on campus to engage in an action. In these cases, student activists challenge their fellow students, faculty, and staff to turn out and show support for the cause they are championing or the conditions they are decrying. In both cases, student activists test the values, resolve, and engagement of their institutions and the people who constitute it.

When it is the target of their demands, the administration acting on behalf of the institution challenges the student activists. Rarely do institutions capitulate to students' calls for changes immediately and without question. In fact, the contentiousness that emerges at this stage of the dialectic is a critical part of the change process for both the student activist and the institution. If the institution were able to readily accommodate the students' demands, it may be a sign that the students' ask was too easy, not indicative of a robust challenge to the culture, structure, or operations of the university. Of course, institutions may respond to student activists by ignoring them, but such a move inevitably tempts students to escalate their protests. It is when the institution seriously engages with the student activists by challenging them to negotiate or helping them see the constraints that hamper its ability to act that the institution advances student learning and growth.

Simply by demanding time and attention from administrators, student activists change their universities. Human and financial resources must be diverted to respond to student activism to prevent "injury, litigation, negative press, and/or damaged relationships" (Harrison & Mather, 2017, p. 117). But student activists aim to effect deeper, more consequential changes as well. The extent to which they actually do so can be debated,[2] and how administrators and faculty account for the effect of activism on their campuses is a question for future research,

but our data suggest that the new student activists feel as if they have been at least somewhat successful in meeting their goals. Whether they spark critical conversations on campus, form new clubs, or mentor younger students who will carry on their work after they graduate, they leave a mark on their institutions. They celebrate small wins (changing hearts and minds, establishing new clubs, holding actions and events), especially as these smaller changes amount to larger cultural shifts within the institution, but they also set out to make a lasting difference. As one respondent put it, "One of my main goals for being at this university is I want to be able to leave a legacy that is going to outlive my time here."

Because they are committed to deep, structural change, savvy student activists view ready accommodation on the part of the institution with suspicion. They wonder if administrators agree to establish committees or task forces simply to wait them out, so that the issues of concern will be "talked to death" and never addressed. They are wary of attempts by administrators to co-opt and flatten their demands or to placate them with symbolic gestures. They worry about changes that are imperceptible to the majority of the community and visible only to those who have been granted entrée to high-level discussions and decision-making tables. They learn to insist on time frames for committees, commitments from presidents, consequences for inaction, and transparency. For example, student activists at Towson University forced their president to sign a statement agreeing to resign if he fell short of his promises to advocate for a course requirement in race relations and to make headway in efforts to improve diversity in student government, Greek life, and tenure review (Dickey, 2016). By refusing to accept institutional hedging or subterfuge and by showing a willingness to escalate their actions in accordance with institutional inattention, student activists insist on significant institutional change.

Though they may have numerous reasons to resist or deny students' demands, colleges and universities have many reasons to work with student activists, not the least of which is self-preservation. Because they are vying for students in a competitive marketplace, and because their rankings hinge in part on the numbers of applicants they attract, insti-

tutions place a high premium on safeguarding and enhancing their reputations or brands. They seek to avoid scandal, mitigate risk, and present themselves in the best possible light with regard to student satisfaction.

Student activists recognize how these neoliberal pressures might lead their universities to engage with them and use such insight to their advantage. On the one hand, they know how to make acts of institutional neglect, hostility, or indifference go viral. On the other hand, they know that their institutions care about putting forward a certain image of engaged students to demonstrate their institutional commitments to social responsibility or diversity. To this end, some student neoactivists agree to allow the university to showcase their efforts in campus promotional material, not because they condone activist performativity in a neoliberal context or want their activism to be consumed by their university, but because acquiescing gives them leverage. It builds good will, further establishes their legitimacy and credibility, and helps solidify their power. While some might question the integrity of students who trade in the tools of neoliberalism—positioning themselves as the university's products in marketing materials, allowing themselves to provide the cover for the university's otherwise hollow commitments to the public good, or even framing themselves as customers who are always right and whose needs, preferences, and desires should be served by their institutions—these strategies are a clever way of using the neoliberal university's own assumptions against it. Student neoactivists work within the constraints of neoliberalism to erode its very foundation, its narrow premises about the meaning and purpose of the university and the role of students within it. As one neoactivist put it, the view of "'student as consumer' somewhat counterintuitively gives students the resources and access to contest and subvert neoliberalism—not to say that neoliberalism provides the tools for its own dismantling, but perhaps it gives us access to the construction site."

Although it always risks becoming subsumed by the neoliberal agenda, the civic imperative of higher education offers a more compelling rationale for colleges and universities to engage critically with student activists than the self-preservation rationale.[3] If they wish to realize their "broader public mission, which includes preparation of students for

responsible citizenship" (Colby & Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxxiii), institutions of higher education should neither suppress nor simply accede to student demands. Instead, they should make space for the conversations student activists seek to initiate, recognizing that these conversations may be fraught, heated, and difficult, but that the contentiousness is itself constructive. It is in the crucible of contention that transformative possibilities are forged.

Implications for Higher Education

In sharing their critiques of their institutions, experiences of both frustration and success, and hopes for the future, student neoactivists in this study surfaced several lessons for higher education about how to support and nurture student activism so that its potential to provoke both institutional and individual growth can be fully realized. Most of these lessons pertain to administrators, who hold power of the purse; however, some lessons for students and faculty can be extracted as well.

One resource students on several campuses found particularly useful was an overarching activist network or association on campus that promoted communication and coordination among different activist or social justice groups. This structure not only helped the groups to learn about one another's campaigns and upcoming actions, so they could turn out for one another's demonstrations and events, but it also enabled them to see where and how their critiques overlapped, their issues intersected, and their visions for the future coalesced. This recognition led some groups to collaborate on shared demands. Working with student government or an office of student life, student activists can establish such umbrella organizations or networks, which have the added benefit of serving as valued sources of support.

The data from this study demonstrate that faculty and staff can play important roles in sparking students' initial turns toward activism, shaping their identities as activists, and supporting their ongoing engagement. As academic advisors, faculty can help students connect their activism to their coursework, pointing out pathways that students may not have even known existed, and as club advisors or sponsors, they

can provide strategic guidance and critical support, challenging students to refine their analyses and approaches. By providing opportunities in their courses for students to conduct project-based learning, to engage in discussion of controversial issues, or to read and reflect on provocative texts, faculty can stimulate or strengthen student activist identity development. In addition, student activists expressed hunger not just for courses on community organizing and social movements but also for an understanding of the history of activism at their school. Projects like the University of Michigan's "Michigan in the World" website, an online exhibition of student research on the university's relations with society, could serve as models. In one linked seminar, "Global Activism at U-M: The Anti-War, Anti-Apartheid, and Anti-Sweatshop Movements," students studied archival records, conducted interviews with alumni, and produced an online public history of these student activist campaigns (Clarke, 2015). Such historical accounts can serve to inspire and inform new generations of student activists who seek to revive efforts or extend the legacies of their predecessors.

On the administrative side, funding implications arise around maintaining class sizes that enable the kind of pedagogy and faculty-student relationships discussed earlier as well as support for student clubs and counseling services. Financial assistance to start new clubs and to fund their programming efforts builds the capacity of student activists, while signaling institutional support for their engagement. Student activists who had access to such resources appreciated knowing money was available for their group to bring in guest speakers, host events, and enable their members to attend conferences. Those who did not have such resources bemoaned the lack of institutional support. Because of how influential attending national conferences proved to be, administrators should think carefully about how to ensure broad access to these kinds of opportunities, both in terms of processes and funding availability.

Perhaps because of the centrality of self-care to activist practice, counseling services on campus emerged as a prominent theme across many interviews. Student activists who had access to high-quality counseling services on campus were grateful to their institutions for providing this important resource, while those who did not have such opportunities

expressed disappointment and frustration. Student activists emphasized the need for culturally competent counselors and counselors who "understand that mental illness is political and has to do with people's identities." While high-quality counseling services stand to benefit all students, especially in light of national trends that show a dramatic surge in usage rates over the last 20 years, activists are especially inclined to avail themselves of this resource because of the emotionally charged, highly personal nature of the work in which they are engaged.

As administrators work to critically engage with student activists, they may consider seeking training not just in racial sensitivity, intergroup dialogue, or antioppression but also in youth-adult partnerships and student voice. Such professional development can strengthen efforts to involve students in decision-making processes in ways that avoid tokenizing, manipulation, or co-optation. Opportunities for students to serve on school boards at local and state levels, on youth commissions and youth councils, and on the boards of community-based organizations continue to expand, along with student voice initiatives in K–12 schools throughout the country (Conner & Cosner, 2016; Conner, Ebby-Rosin, & Brown, 2015). As more students gain experience at the decision-making table or interact with peers who are representing them in these bodies, they will come to college with a greater expectation of shared governance and a stronger sense of agency, believing that their voices matter and deserve to be heard. Some colleges and universities are already engaged in discussions with student activists about creating student seats on the board of trustees. As this trend seems likely to continue, college and university administrators would do well to prepare for it by heeding the lessons and learning the best practices of K–12 administrators and community leaders who have long been nurturing productive youth-adult partnerships around responsive, effective education (Mitra, 2008).

Implications for Secondary Schools

The K–12 education system, similarly, can help prepare and promote an engaged citizenry by supporting teachers in regularly soliciting student

voice in their classrooms. More so than civics classes, service-learning experiences, or involvement in student government, student voice at the classroom level was strongly associated with the timing of activist identity formation. One way to help students see themselves as people capable of taking action to address the problems they perceive in their institutions, communities, or country is to give them a voice in their classrooms. Having a voice in the high school classroom can be a powerful and transformative experience because it not only calls on students to play a more active role in their own education but also counters traditional status hierarchies in the classroom. When teachers invite and act on student voice, when they solicit and use student ideas about what can be improved in the learning environment to better support deep learning, they endow students with a measure of authority and power that is typically inaccessible to youth. While student voice is not tantamount to student power, teachers who solicit student voice may plant the seeds of critical consciousness, prompting students to consider how power traditionally operates within systems to marginalize youth, how youth can claim authority and assert their expertise, and how doing so can lead to better learning experiences and more productive learning environments.

School-based clubs and community-based organizations also have a hand in shaping students' identities as activists. When educational budgets are tight, support for extracurricular programming is often vulnerable. The findings of this study about the salience of these clubs to activists' sociopolitical development should give policy makers pause before making cuts to extracurricular programs and community-based organizations. Formative experiences in these spaces can help set young people on a trajectory of civic engagement and social responsibility.

For many student activists in this study, their colleges and universities represent places of dissonance and contradiction. Their campuses are sites of both liberation and oppression. As they unite with like-minded others to address shared concerns, they feel a sense of critical solidarity that is empowering and transformative. As one respondent, Lizzie, said,

"The biggest things that have just transformed me into an activist is I've just started seeing things in a different light; it's like the sheet was removed or whatever. After I moved out of [state], I just felt a lot more liberated to fight for things that I believed in. I also discovered that I was not alone in fighting for the things that I believed in, which was a really amazing feeling." At the same time as their activism can be liberating, the concerns that draw these student neoactivists together in the first place are often rooted in experiences of oppression or perceptions of institutional complicity in social injustice. Student neoactivists' relationships to their institutions are therefore quite complicated, but they learn to inhabit and interrogate these contradictions. One respondent who campaigned for greater diversity and inclusion at her school explained, "The only reason why I'm being critical of [my school] is because I love it here and I want to see it better. This is literally my home; I love it here, and that's why I expect more from it." This critical love for their institutions, which for many extended beyond their schools to include US society, enables student neoactivists to understand, critique, and directly challenge what is, even as they imagine and strive to enact what could be.

Working within the neoliberal university to construct a robust alternative to it, with their radical creativity and critical hope, student neoactivists help revitalize and refashion the core civic mission of higher education. Rather than apolitical preparation for democracy, the civic imperative of higher education under neoactivism entails direct and overtly political engagement in democratic life. Student neoactivists therefore challenge narrow neoliberal conceptions of the purpose of higher education, the role of students, and the possibilities for democratic society. They understand that education is itself political, inextricably linked to privilege and power. But through their successes and ongoing efforts, they demonstrate and defend the transformative capacity of higher education: its power to change the trajectories of the individuals who pass through it; itself; and ultimately the society in which it plays a vital role as a generator of new knowledge, an experimental site for new solutions, and an incubator of new civic actors will-

ing and able to lead social and institutional change. To the extent that it is supported and sustained, neoactivism on campus holds the promise of democratic renewal, offering hope for a stronger, more inclusive, and more responsive society.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Although 426 respondents began the survey, 237 completed it in its entirety. Most demographic questions appeared at the end of the survey, though we did ask about year in school and institutional type at the outset.

2. Of course, not all youth have ready access to college, and financial pressures combined with other social factors force some low-income students who do enroll in higher education to withdraw. A 2015 report by the National Center for Education Statistics found that only 14% of students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds graduate from college, compared to 60% of those from high-socioeconomic backgrounds. These disparities exacerbate the civic opportunity gap between poor students and their wealthier counterparts. The gap has been well documented with respect to differential access to civics education in grade school and differential opportunities for civic engagement at the community level (Atkins & Hart, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2010). Youth who grow up in neighborhoods marked by concentrated poverty and who attend under-resourced schools encounter formidable barriers not only to developing their civic identities during their teenage years but also to gaining access to the college learning environment, where these identities are further formed (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007).

3. Frances Beal, the founder of the Third World Women's Alliance, which originated as a committee within the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), is credited with coining the idea of double jeopardy to describe the tolls of the racism and sexism that women of color experience. This idea, later expanded to triple and quadruple jeopardy to reflect discrimination on the basis of class and sexual orientation, helped provide an initial foundation for intersectional theory to arise. The history of self-care has similarly been traced to the 1960s-era Civil Rights movement (Harris, 2017). "For Black and Brown communities who were being systematically oppressed and killed . . . self-care was a courageous act that started with acknowledging that they had needs, that their needs were important, and that those needs deserved to be met, no matter what their oppressors said. Self-care was a way to step away from toxic environments, to admit the hurt, and to find the time and space needed to heal" (Trombetta, 2018). Although various movement actors, including feminists and LGBTQ activists as well as civil rights champions, asserted their right to self-care as a radical act in the 1960s and 1970s, the language of self-care did not become widely accepted within activist communities until recently. Civil rights icon Angela

Davis, for example, in a 2014 talk at the University of the Pacific, said, "Self-care has to be incorporated into all our efforts. This is something new, this is something I have learned from younger generations. I had to learn from younger people that it's as important to take care of yourself—and to do this within a collective context. So, yes, this means exercising the body. Yes, this means finding a place for spiritual expression. This holistic approach to organizing is, I think, what will eventually move us along the trajectory that will move us to some victories" (Berglund Center, 2014).

4. According to one estimate, 13,000 women had expressed their intention to run for office in just 4 months following the 2016 election (Landsbaum, 2017)

5. The new wave of activism has not been immune to neoliberal efforts to generate a profit and turn citizens into consumers. Many movements now have products available for purchase, including T-shirts, hats, posters, yard signs, and stickers, which can be used to perform activist identities. The second volume of the fashion magazine *Teen Vogue*, which was released in the summer of 2017, was titled "The Sound of Protest," and it included articles that discussed the intersection of fashion, music, and politics over time. Youth activism was in vogue, once again, quite literally and this time, quickly commercialized by entrepreneurs and large multimedia corporations alike.

6. For further discussion of accomplishments see Workneh (2015) and Dickey (2016).

7. A report by the Goldwater Institute, for example, condemns university administrators for capitulating to student divestment demands, and thereby infringing on free speech. Referencing campaigns to divest from fossil fuel companies and companies based in Israel, the authors write, "At any university such divestment would tend to inhibit intellectual freedom" (Kurtz, Manley, & Butcher, 2017, p. 5). This report includes a model bill designed purportedly to protect free speech on campuses, which has become the basis for legislation in 17 states. After introducing similar legislation in the US Senate in February 2018, Senator Orrin Hatch (2018) wrote an editorial in the *National Review* indicting college administrators for failing to encourage the free expression of conservative ideas on their campuses: He denounced "college administrators who apply one set of rules for those with whom they agree, and another set of rules for those who stand outside the popular point of view."

8. These institutional actions have engendered considerable controversy. For example, in a report for the National Association of Scholars (NAS), David Randall (2017) argues that "radical demonstration on our streets is now chronic, and that is an achievement of the New Civics. The New Civics is working to make such radical protest a daily occurrence, and America ungovernable save along progressive lines" (p. 35). Referencing a lawsuit that was filed when an academic center at Pomona College providing funding to transport students to an anti-Trump rally on November 9, 2016, he writes, "The NAS recommends that universities [be sued] for each and every political act they commit. Lawsuits, and the threat of lawsuits, may actually prod academic administrators to shut down New Civics programs" (p. 34).

9. For a discussion of the need to revitalize the civic mission of higher education, see Checkoway (2001); Levine (2013).

10. Though there is a robust literature on civic identity development (Rubin, 2007; Yates & Youniss, 1999) and political identity development (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007; Flanagan, 2013), there is a paucity of literature on activist identity development. Sociopolitical development theory is useful because it proposes a stage theory of development in which the ultimate stage, known as the liberatory stage, is marked by engagement in activism (Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). However, because the theory was developed based on observations of African American youth, it is possible that the process of sociopolitical development unfolds differently for youth of different backgrounds. Few studies have as of yet used this framework to explore the development of youth with privileged identities to see if the basic tenets of the theory hold for youth with less direct experiences of oppression.

11. To protect the individual and institution, they are not identified here. All participants' names in this text are pseudonyms.

Chapter 1. Identifying as an Activist

1. The relationship between inward-facing activism and race was significant, X^2 (1, N = 206) = 6.12, p = .012, with more nonwhite students facing inward. The relationship between inward-facing activism and sexuality was significant, X^2 (1, N = 200) = 7.38, p = .007, with more queer students facing inward. The relationship between inward-facing activism and issue area was significant, X^2 (1, N = 228) = 28.70, p = .000, with more students who were fighting for racial justice facing inward and X^2 (1, N = 228) = 5.84, p = .016, with more students who were campaigning for gender equity facing inward.

2. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between activist type and various dimensions of identity. The relationship between gender identity and activist type was significant, X^2 (8, N = 40) = 15.86, p = < .05, with more women and people who do not subscribe to gender identities than expected classified as outright activists and more men than expected classified as uncomfortable activists.

3. Mary Bernstein (2005) reviews the literature on identity politics and contrasts neo-Marxist interpretations of the term with those utilized by new social movement theorists and poststructuralists.

4. Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to examine the relationship between the causes students adopted and dimensions of their identity. The relationship between racial justice and the race of the students as white or nonwhite was significant, X^2 (1, N = 206) = 5.87, p = < .015. The relationship between gender equality and the gender identity of the students as man, woman, or do not subscribe to gender binaries was also significant, X^2 (2, N = 226) = 26.90, p = .000. The relationship between LGBTQIA causes and queer or straight identities was statistically significant, X^2 (1, N = 200) = 39.18, p = .000.

5. The relationships between racial justice and students' gender was significant, X^2 (2, N = 226) = 10.21, p = .006. There was also a statistically significant rela-

tionship between racial justice and sexuality, X^2 (1, N = 200) = 15.93, p = .000. The relationships between LGBTQIA struggles and students' gender was significant, X^2 (2, N = 226) = 12.81, p = .002. The relationships between gender equality and students' sexuality was significant, X^2 (1, N = 200) = 19.71, p = .000.

6. Neoactivists linked their activism to more issues or causes (M = 7.8, SD = 4.3) than did non-neoactivists, t(225) = 2.9, p = .004.

Chapter 2. Becoming an Activist: The Turn toward Activism

1. Those who became activists prior to college embraced a mean of 7.89 (SD = 4.9) issues and used an average of 3.81 (SD = 2.2) strategies, while those who became activists in college embraced a mean of 7.10 (SD = 3.79) issues and used an average of 4.0 (SD = 1.81) strategies.

2. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the timing of activist identity formation (before or during college) and tactics used in college activism. The relationship between timing and the use of sit-ins was significant, X^2 (1, N = 207) = 3.77, p = < .05, with fewer who became activist prior to college engaging in sit-ins in college than those who adopted the activist identity in college. The relationship between timing and online activism was also significant, X^2 (1, N = 207) = 6.1, p = < .01, with more who became activists prior to college engaging in online activism in college than those who adopted the activist identity in college.

3. Student activists involved in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement have had their pictures along with information about their personal lives posted on Canary Mission, a website devoted to documenting "people and groups that promote hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses." The website, which some decry as a blacklist, claims that every individual featured on the site has been carefully researched and sourced. One student activist featured on the site described how her employer was pressured to fire her after she participated in a Palestinian rights campaign in Knoxville, Tennessee. If the employer refused to capitulate, his organization would be denounced as anti-Semitic (Gresh, 2018). These online tactics can make future employers wary of hiring student activists both during college and after graduation, and people whose information is listed on the site have experienced acts of harassment and intimidation in person as well as online.

4. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between the timing of activist identity formation (before or during college) and tactics used in high school. The relationship between timing and the use of protests in high school was significant, X^2 (1, N = 135) = 9.68, p = < .002, with more who became activist prior to college engaging in protests in high school than those who adopted the activist identity in college. Similarly significant relationships were found for online activism in high school, X^2 (1, N = 135) = 6.48, p = < .01, and for lobbying activities in high school, X^2 (1, N = 135) = 4.15, p = < .05, with more students who adopted activist identities in high school adopting these tactics than their counterparts who became activists in college.

5. Those who adopted the identity of activist prior to college engaged in more forms of activism in high school ($M = 2.25$) than those who adopted the identity in college ($M = 1.37$), $t(133) = 4.55$, $p < .000$, two-tailed.

6. We began and largely completed our survey data collection prior to Trump's election. Most of our interviews, however, were conducted after his election. The timing of the data collection allowed us to explore how respondents' trajectories as activists shifted in the wake of his election and inauguration.

Chapter 3. The Emotional and Relational Dimensions of Activism: Familial and Peer Influences

1. Statistically significant relationships were found between no support and sexual orientation, X^2 (1, $N = 35$) = 6.17, $p = .013$, with more queer students than expected reporting no familial support for their activism, and more gender-fluid students than expected reporting a similar result: X^2 (2, $N = 38$) = 6.11, $p = .047$.

2. Statistically significant relationships were found between critical support and when the activist identity was adopted, X^2 (1, $N = 35$) = 3.664, $p = .05$, with more students who adopted activist identities in high school receiving critical support than their counterparts who became activists in college.

3. The relationships between racial identity and two motivating emotions were significant, X^2 (1, $N = 210$) = 17.31, $p = .000$, with more whites than expected indicating a desire to improve society and X^2 (1, $N = 210$) = 5.03, $p = .025$, with more whites than expected expressing a desire to support others through their activism.

Chapter 4. The Intellectual Dimension of Activism: Educational Influences

1. On the 2014 NAEP Civics assessment, 23% of the eighth-grade students who were tested earned a proficient score. Overall results did not differ significantly from the 2010 administration.

2. MSD boasts a multicultural student body, with 41% students of color, but very few students who are learning English (4%). Although it is situated in an affluent community where the median household income in 2016 was $131,340, and the median house value was $596,212 (http://www.city-data.com/city/Parkland-Florida.html), MSD draws a considerable share of its student body from the less affluent Coral Springs, where median household income in 2016 was $70,031 and the median house value was $336,100. Nearly one quarter of the school's students (23%) qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Because its students perform well on state tests, MSD ranks highly on state performance measures. As a result, when faculty positions open at the school, department chairs and the principal have a deep pool of teacher talent from which to draw. Indeed, MSD is staffed by committed career teachers, 44% of whom hold advanced degrees and some of whom teach only one preparation. Jeff Foster, the AP government teacher, for example, is a 20-year veteran educator who teaches only that class to several sections of students.

The school's curriculum is rigorous and robust, with 21 AP courses on offer. The

block schedule, in which classes meet for 90 minutes at a time, grants teachers the opportunity to explore topics in-depth with students and to engage them in sustained discussion and analysis. Teachers make a point of incorporating current events into their courses. For example, just three months before the shooting, the Las Vegas outdoor concert massacre was discussed by students in many social studies classes (Sandra Davis, pers. comm., September 7, 2018). Elective classes include the year-long History of the Holocaust class, for which teacher Ivy Schamis partners with the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation to use IWitness, an interactive platform where students are able to ask questions of Holocaust survivors; and debate class where students researched and debated various issues, including gun control (Gurney, 2018). Established during the 2017–2018 school year, a new personalization course allows teachers to get to know their students and establish mentoring relationships. Teachers appreciate that the principal of the school has made the decision to fund such a rich array of elective courses, including International Relations and Sociology, that aren't included in the budgets at other schools, and that he entrusts the teachers with creative freedom to "present the curriculum in a way that will allow students to thrive" (Sandra Davis, pers. comm., September 7, 2018).

Building on the legacy of its namesake, the school has a strong ethos of activism and stewardship. Inscribed on the beam in a prominent courtyard in the front of the school are the words, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." In addition, most of the March for Our Lives student leaders were active in their school's strong extracurricular program. David Hogg was a passionate student journalist and a member of the school's debate team. Cameron Kasky was active in the drama program. Emma Gonzalez was president of the Gay-Straight Alliance, and Jaclyn Corin was president of the junior class. These extracurricular experiences no doubt equipped them with leadership skills, communication skills, and a poise and presence that helped attract media attention and accelerate their movement.

3. The Justice Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act requires all middle school students in Florida to take a civics course and pass a comprehensive end-of-course civics exam for promotion from middle school. The act also calls for the integration of civics into K–12 language arts courses. Although some teachers at MSD have not noticed a change in their students' preparedness because the high school's feeder schools have always included the civics standards in their curricula, a 2017 study found that the act is having a strong effect (Levine & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017). Teachers in Florida are using evidence-based strategies to teach civics, such as regularly discussing current events in the classroom (two thirds doing so weekly), engaging students in debates and discussion of controversial issues, and using teaching simulations such as debates or mock trials. Students' test scores are rising, and, most encouragingly, so too are their levels of civic commitment and engagement. Of a large sample of Florida seventh graders studied after the full implementation of the act, two thirds reported that they "volunteer in their communities, 89% say that they discuss what they study in civics at home, and three quarters want to help make their city or state a better place to live" (Levine

& Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2017, p. 14). Furthermore, the researchers found a strong positive correlation between teachers' use of the recommended practices for teaching civics and students' levels of civic engagement in their communities.

4. A number of studies have identified civic opportunity gaps between predominantly wealthy white students and low-income students of color. Research shows that students have differential access to rich civic learning opportunities (Hart & Atkins, 2002; Levine, 2009; Levinson, 2010; Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Spring, Dietz, & Grimm, 2007). One study found that African American students have fewer civic-oriented government classes, current event discussions, and experiences in an open classroom climate than white students, and Latino students have fewer opportunities to participate in community service, simulations, and open classroom climates than white students (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). Analysis of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education data showed that students in classes with higher average SES levels were 1.89 times more likely to encounter service-learning activities and 1.42 times more likely to have debates or panel discussions in their social studies classes than their counterparts in classes with lower average SES levels (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). Another study found that 60% of rural millennials live in "civic deserts" or areas characterized by little opportunity to observe, participate in, or learn about civic and political life (Kawashima-Ginsberg & Sullivan, 2017).

5. There were no statistically significant differences between whether one became an activist during or before college by socioeconomic status or by racial or ethnic minority status.

6. More white students than expected and fewer nonwhite students than expected reported experiencing service-learning courses in high school, X^2 (1, N = 212) = 3.68, p = .05.

7. The relationship between participation in activist-oriented clubs in high school and the timing of activist identity formation was significant, X^2 (1, N = 227) = 22.05, p = .000, with more students who became activists before college participating in high school clubs than expected.

8. X^2 (1, N = 228) = 6.52, $p \leq .01$.

9. $t(227) = 2.33$, $p = .02$.

10. $F(2, 199) = 3.25$, $p = .041$.

11. Community-based research, $t(221) = -3.17$, $p = .002$; took a course that shaped their identity, $t(221) = -2.2$, $p = .027$; formed a club, $t(221) = -3.34$, $p = .001$; read a text that shaped their identity, $t(221) = -1.9$, $p = .056$; had a voice in school governance, $t(221) = 2.20$, $p = .029$.

12. The rarity of these courses among survey respondents may reflect how uncommon these types of courses continue to be on college campuses, despite their increasing popularity over the last two decades. The most recent faculty survey results from the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, found that only 16.9% of faculty reported teaching a service-learning course (Eagan et al., 2014). The result may also speak to how challenging it is to implement these courses in a way that actually deepens, rather than under-

mines, students' motivation to effect change and their sense of political efficacy (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006). In fact, in this study, students who did take a service-learning course did not feel any more or less effective as activists than their counterparts who did not take such a course.

Chapter 5. The Behavioral Dimension of Activism: Strategies and Successes

1. The relationship between institutional type and organizational power was significant, X^2 (1, N = 40) = 5.013, p = .025.

2. The relationships between students' socioeconomic status and whether they were involved with the following causes was significant, with more low-income students than expected embracing the causes: economic justice, X^2 (2, N = 196) = 10.19, p = .006; education equity, X^2 (2, N = 196) = 10.09, p = .006; and criminal justice reform, X^2 (2, N = 196) = 12.56, p = .002. An anova analysis revealed significant differences between middle- and low-income student activists' number of causes, F = 3.01 (2), p =.05.

3. r(190) = .279, p < .01.

4. X^2 (1, N = 206) = 10.26, p = .002.

5. More low-income students than expected participated in walkouts, X^2 (2, N = 185) = 6.49, p = .039, and in creative actions, X^2 (2, N = 185) = 6.03, p = .049.

6. More white students than expected participated in letter-writing campaigns, X^2 (1, N = 195) = 4.88, p = .029, and online activism, X^2 (1, N = 195) = 3.97, p = .046; and more students of color participated in sit-ins, X^2 (1, N = 195) = 4.32, p = .032.

7. The relationship between institutional community (urban, suburban, rural) and online activism was significant, X^2 (2, N = 105) = 8.31, p = .016.

8. The relationship between institutional region and online activism was significant, X^2 (3, N = 237) = 9.56, p = .023.

Conclusion

1. *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (Della Porta & Diani, 2015) does not include the terms *youth*, *students*, or *university* in its index, and *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Snow, Soule, Kriesi, & McCammon, 2019) makes only passing references to SDS, SNCC, and a couple of the more recent student protests.

2. Roderick Ferguson (2017) has argued that the appointment of more deans of diversity, equity, and inclusion, "the bureaucratization of diversity," is a response to student protest that serves to enhance the brand of the university and meets "administration and corporate needs rather than the intellectual and social needs of [the] communities" (p. 28) represented by student activists.

3. Some feminist scholars have critiqued the civic mission of higher education "to produce better citizens" as a means of reproducing rather than disrupting the role of the neoliberal corporate university in maintaining the status quo (see Boyd & Sandell, 2012; Orr, 2011).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AAUP (American Association of University Professors). (2018a). National security, the assault on science, and academic freedom. *Academe*, *104*, 25–37.

AAUP (American Association of University Professors). (2018b). Campus free-speech legislation: History, progress, and problems. *Academe*, *104*, 38–47.

Alexander, D., & Peterson-Withorn, C. (2018, October 2). How Trump is trying—and failing—to get rich off his presidency. *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/danalexander/2018/10/02/how-trump-is-tryingand-failingto-get-rich-off-his-presidency/#5ecb220b3b1a

Andrews, B., & Pauly, M. (2015, November 19). Campus protests are spreading like wildfire. *Mother Jones*. Retrieved from https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/11/missouri-student-protests-racism/

Anduiza, E., Cristancho, C., & Sabucedo, J. M. (2011). *The political protest of the outraged in Spain: What's new?* Unpublished manuscript, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain.

Atkins, R., & Hart, D. (2003). Neighborhoods, adults, and the development of civic identity in urban youth. *Applied Developmental Science*, *7*(3), 156–164.

Baldi, S., Perie, M., Skidmore, D., Greenberg, E., & Hanh, C. (2001). What democracy means to ninth-graders: U.S. results from the international IEA civic education study. *Educational Statistics Quarterly 3*(2), 89–96.

Barrett, D. (2015). *Teenage rebels*. Portland, OR: Microcosm.

Bauman, D. (2018, February 16). After 2016 election, campus hate crimes seemed to jump. Here's what the data tell us. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/After-2016-Election-Campus/242577

Belton, K. B. (2018, March 8). Deregulation under President Trump: Behind the numbers. *Industry Week*. Retrieved from https://www.industryweek.com/economy/deregulation-under-president-trump-behind-numbers

Bernstein, M. (2005). Identity politics. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *31*, 47–74.

Biddix, J. P. (2014). Development through dissent: Campus activism as civic learning. *New Directions for Higher Education*, *167*, 73–85. doi:10.1002/he.20106

Blumenstyk, G. (2017, January 22). Taking it to the streets at the women's march as a way of learning. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/Taking-It-to-the-Streets-at/238978

Boren, M. (2001). *Student resistance: A history of the unruly subject*. New York: Routledge.

Boyd, N., & Sandell, J. (2012). Unpaid and critically engaged: Feminist interns in the nonprofit industrial complex. *Feminist Teacher*, 22(3), 251–265.
Brodsky, A. (2016). Working for change, learning from work: Student empowerment and challenges in the movement to end campus gender violence. In J. Conner & S. M. Rosen (Eds.), *Contemporary youth activism* (pp. 245–261). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
Brown, A., Parrish, W., & Speri, A. (2017, May 27). Leaked documents reveal counterterrorism tactics used at Standing Rock to "defeat pipeline insurgencies." *The Intercept*. Retrieved from https://theintercept.com/2017/05/27/leaked-documents-reveal-security-firms-counterterrorism-tactics-at-standing-rock-to-defeat-pipeline-insurgencies/
Campbell, D. E. (2006). *Why we vote: How schools and communities shape our civic life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Caygle, H. (2018, March 8). Record-breaking number of women run for office. *Politico*. Retrieved from https://www.politico.com/story/2018/03/08/women-rule-midterms-443267
Checkoway, B. (2001). Renewing the civic mission of the American research university. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 72(2), 125–147.
Chenoweth, E., Perkoski, E., Pressman, J., & Thurber, C. (2017, May 22). New data shows a sharp increase in U.S. protest activity in April. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/05/22/new-data-shows-a-sharp-increase-in-u-s-protest-activity-in-april/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.d1181bbb792c
Christakis, Erika. (2015, October). E-mail to Silliman College, Yale University. Posted on FIRE, October 30. https://www.thefire.org/email-from-erika-christakis-dressing-yourselves-email-to-silliman-college-yale-students-on-halloween-costumes/
CIRCLE (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement). (2017). *Millennials after 2016: Post-election poll analysis*. N.p.: Tufts University. Retrieved from https://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Millennials-after-2016-Post-Election-Poll-Analysis.pdf
CIRCLE (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement). (2016). *Young voters in the 2016 general election*. N.p.: Tufts University. Retrieved from http://civicyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CIRCLE-Full-Exit-Poll-Analysis_Final.pdf
Clarke, K. (2015). As bicentennial nears, U-M offers courses in campus history. Retrieved from https://record.umich.edu/articles/bicentennial-nears-u-m-offers-courses-campus-history
Colby, A., Beaumont, E., Ehrlich, T., & Corngold, J. (2007). *Educating for democracy: Preparing undergraduates for responsible political engagement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publications.
Colby, A., & Ehrlich, T. (2000). Introduction. In T. Ehrlich (Ed.), *Civic responsibility and higher education* (pp. xxii–xlii). Westport, CT: The American Council on Education and Oryx Press.
Cole, R., & Heinecke, W. (2018). Higher education after neoliberalism: Activism as

a guiding light. *Policy Futures in Education*, May 24, 1–27. doi:10.1177/1478210318767459

Conner, J. (2014). Lessons that last: Former youth organizers' reflections on what and how they learned. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *23*, 447–484. doi:10.1080/10508406.2014.928213

Conner, J. & Cosner, K. (2016). Youth change agents: Comparing the sociopolitical identities of youth organizers and youth commissioners. *Democracy and Education*, *24*(1), 1–12.

Conner, J., Ebby-Rosin, R., & Brown, A. S. (Eds.). (2015). *Student voice in American educational policy. Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, *114*. New York, NY: Teachers College Record.

Conner, J., & Rosen, S. M. (2015). Zombies, truants, and flash mobs: How youth organizers respond to and shape youth policy. In J. Conner, R. Ebby-Rosin, & A. S. Brown (Eds.), *Student voice in American educational policy. Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, *114* (pp. 203–220). New York: Teachers College Record.

Conner, J., & Rosen, S. M. (Eds.). (2016). *Contemporary youth activism: Advancing social justice in the United States*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, presence, power: Student voice in educational research and reform. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *36*(4), 359–390.

Costanza-Chock, S. (2012). *Youth and social movements: Key lessons for allies*. Berkman Center Research Publication No. 2013–13. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2199531

Craven, J. (2015, September 30). Black Lives Matter co-founder reflects on the origins of movement. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-lives-matter-opal-tometi_n_560c1c59e4b0768127003227

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, *1989*(1), 139–167. Retrieved from http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8

CREW (Citizens for Ethics and Responsibility in Washington). (2018, January 19). *Profiting from the presidency*. Washington, DC: Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. Retrieved from https://www.citizensforethics.org/profitingfromthepresidency/

Crossley, N. (2008). Social networks and student activism: On the politicizing effect of campus connections. *The Sociological Review*, *56*(1), 18–38. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2008.00775.x

Curnow, J., & Gross, A. (2016). Injustice is not an investment: Student activism, climate justice, and the fossil fuel divestment campaign. In J. Conner & S. Rosen (Eds.), *Contemporary youth activism* (pp. 367–383). Santa Barbara, CA, Praeger.

Curwen, T., Song, J., & Gordon, L. (2015, November 18). What's different about the latest wave of college student activism? *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from https://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-campus-unrest-20151118-story.html

Daniel, J., & Valladares, M. R. (2016). Telling our stories, claiming our space, and becoming change makers. In J. Conner & S. M. Rosen (Eds.), *Contemporary youth activism* (pp. 203–221). Santa Barbara, CA, Praeger.

Davis, A. (2014). (Lecture). Forest Grove, OR: Pacific University Oregon, Berglund Center. April 18. Retrieved from https://vimeo.com/94879430?cjevent=bc2e29a0c7fc11e881a600cb0a240613

Deitsch, M., and González, E. (2018). Interview by Trevor Noah. *The Trevor Noah Show*, August 9. https://www.facebook.com/thedailyshow/videos/10532741081677368/?v=10532741081677368.

Della Porta, D., & Diani, M. (Eds.). (2015). *The Oxford handbook of social movements*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Dickey, J. (2016). The revolution on America's campuses. *Time*. Retrieved from http://time.com/4347099/college-campus-protests/

Diemer, M., & Rapa, L. (2016). Unraveling the complexity of critical consciousness, political efficacy, and political action among marginalized adolescents. *Child Development 87*(1), 221–238. doi:10.1111/cdev.12446

Dubois, L., & Connors, R. (2012, March 24). Philly's million hoodie march draws thousands. Retrieved from https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Phillys-Million-Hoodie-March-Set-for-Friday-Night-144024806.html

Eagan, K., Stolzenberg, E., Bates, A., Aragon, M., Suchard, M., & Ruis-Aguilar, C. (2016). *The American freshman: National norms fall 2015*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.

Eagan, K., Stolzenberg, E. B., Ramirez, J. J., Aragon, M. C., Suchard, M. R., & Hurtado, S. (2014). *The American freshman: National norms fall 2014*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.

The Economist. (2019, February 14). Millennial socialism. *The Economist*, 11–12.

Ehrlich, T. (2000). *Civic responsibility and higher education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Elephrane. (2016, November 1). What is the Black Lives Matter movement? Retrieved from https://elephrame.com/textbook/What-is-the-Black-Lives-Matter-movement/article

Estoque, R. (2018, January 31). Gonzaga updates contract with Nike due to student groups efforts. *The Gonzaga Bulletin*. Retrieved from https://www.gonzagabulletin.com/news/gonzaga-updates-contract-with-nike-due-to-student-groups-efforts/article_ebf8e844-06e9-11e8-b057-c753f98380c2.html

Ferguson, R. (2017). *We demand: The university and student protests*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Fernández, J., Gastona, J., Nguyena, M., Rovarisa, J., Robinsona, R., & Aguilara, D. (2018). Documenting sociopolitical development via participatory action research (PAR) with women of color student activists in the neoliberal university. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, *6*(2), 591–607. doi:10.5964/jspp.v6i2.900

Fine, M. (1998). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (pp. 130–155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fine, M. (2016). Just methods in revolting times. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *13*(4): 347–365. doi:10.1080/14780887.2016.1219800
Flanagan, C. (2013). *Teenage citizens: The political theories of the young*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Fountain, H., & Schwartz, J. (2017, March 16). Scientists bristle at Trump's budget cuts to research. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/16/climate/trump-budget-science-research.html
Ford, D. (2015, November 10). Jonathan Butler: Meet the man whose hunger strike flipped the script at Mizzou. *CNN*. Retrieved from https://www.cnn.com/2015/11/09/us/jonathan-butler-hunger-strike-missouri-profile/index.html
Franklin, V. P. (2003). Introduction: African American student activism in the 20th century. *The Journal of African American History*, *88*(2), 105–109.
Frantz, T. (1968). Protest prone students and institutions. *NASPA Journal*, *6*(2), 91–93. doi:10.1080/00220973.1968.11071140
Gallay, E., Lupinacci, J., Sarmiento, C., Flanagan, C., & Lowenstein, E. (2016). Youth environmental stewardship and activism for the environmenal commons. In J. Conner & S. M. Rosen (Eds.), *Contemporary youth activism* (pp. 113–132). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
Gardner, F. (2015, March 27). #BlackLivesMatter & ecology study. Fossil Fuel Divestment Student Network. Retrieved from http://studentsdivest.org/blm_and_ecology
Garza, A. (2014, October 7). The herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement. *The Feminist Wire*. Retrieved from https://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/
Gattuso, R. (2015, April 21). Climate justice is intersectional feminism in action. *Feministing*. Retrieved from http://feministing.com/2015/04/21/climate-justice-is-intersectional-feminism-in-action/
Ginwright, S. (2010). *Black youth rising: Activism and healing in urban America*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
Giroux, H. (2010). Bare pedagogy and the scourge of neoliberalism: Rethinking higher education as the practice of freedom. *The Educational Forum*, *74*(3), 184–196.
Giroux, H. (2013). Occupy colleges now: Students as the new public intellectuals. *Cultural Studies*, *13*(3), 150–153. doi: 10.1177/1532708613477736
Giroux, H. (2014). *Neoliberalism's war on higher education*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
Goloff, B. (2016, May 1). Why I am fighting for climate justice. *The Phoenix*. Retrieved from https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2016/05/01/why-i-am-fighting-for-climate-justice/
Gould, J., Jamieson, K. H., Levine, P., McConnell, T., & Smith, D. B. (Eds.). (2011). *Guardian of democracy: The civic mission of schools*. Philadelphia: Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania.
Graham, G. (2006). *Young activists: American high school students in the age of protest*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

Greene, S. (2018, June 28). Meet the small-town student activists emerging in Texas after the mass shooting in Santa Fe. *The Texas Tribune*. Retrieved from https://www.texastribune.org/2018/06/28/Texas-gun-control-high-school-student-activists-Santa-Fe-mass-shooting/

Gresh, A. (2018). How Israel spies on US citizens. *The Nation*. Retrieved from https://www.thenation.com/article/how-israel-spies-on-us-citizens/

Gurney, K. (2018, February 23). Last fall they debated gun control in class. Now they debate lawmakers on TV. *The Miami Herald*. Retrieved from https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/education/article201678544.html

Hall, B. (Writer), Costello, K. (Writer), & Cappiello, H. (Director). (2016). Higher learning. [Television series episode]. In S. Hoffman (Producer), *Madame Secretary*. Los Angeles, CA: CBS.

Han, H. (2009). *Moved to action: Motivation, participation, and inequality in American politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Harris, A. (2017, April 5). The history of self-care. *Slate*. Retrieved from http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2017/04/the_history_of_self_care.html

Harrison, L. M., & Mather, D. C. (2017). Making meaning of student activism. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, *29*(2), 117–135.

Hart, D., & Atkins, R. (2002). Civic competence in urban youth. *Applied Developmental Science*, *6*(4), 227–236.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hatch, O. (2018, February 7). Protecting freedom of speech where it matters most, on college campuses. *National Review*. Retrieved from https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/02/free-speech-college-campuses-legislation-ensure-it/

Herrera, C. (2013, October 15). *Who are the dream defenders?* WUFT-FM. Retrieved from https://www.wuft.org/news/2013/10/15/who-are-the-dream-defenders/

Hesse, T. (2017, February 23). Campus conservatives get a lesson in activism. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/Campus-Conservatives-Get-a/239309

Holeman, H. (2007). *Awakening a social conscience* (doctoral dissertation). University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

Hull, B. (Writer), & Cappiello, J. (Director). (2016). Higher learning [Television series episode]. In *Madame Secretary*. New York: CBS.

Hunt, J. (2018). *University of Nike*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House.

Kahne, J., & Middaugh, E. (2008). High quality civic education: What is it and who gets it? *Social Education*, *72* (1), 34–39.

Kahne, J., & Sporte, S. (2008). Developing citizens: The impact of civic learning opportunities on students' commitment to civic participation. *American Educational Research Journal*, *45*(3), 738–766.

Kahne, J., & Westheimer, J. (2006). The limits of political efficacy: Educating citizens for a democratic society. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *39*(2), 289–296.

Karter, J., Robbins, B., & McInenery, R. (2019). Student activism in the neoliberal

university: A hermeneutic phenomenological analysis. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167819834751
Kawashima-Ginsberg, K., & Sullivan, F. (2017, March 28). Analysis: Many rural millennials are alienated from politics. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/analysis-many-rural-millennials-alienated-politics
Kezar, A. (2010). Faculty and staff partnering with student activists: Unexplored terrains of interaction and development. *Journal of College Student Development*, *51*(5), 451–480. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2010.0001
Kezar, A., Chambers, T., & Burkhardt, J. (2005). *Higher education for the public good*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
Kezar, A., & Maxey, D. (2014). Collective action on campus toward student development and democratic engagement. *New Directions for Higher Education*, *167*, 31–41. doi:10.1002/he.20103
Kurtz, S., Manley, J., & Butcher, J. (2017). *Campus free speech: A legislative proposal*. Phoenix, AZ: Goldwater Institute.
Landsbaum, C. (2017). First they marched, now more than 13,000 women are planning to run for office. *New York Magazine*. Retrieved from https://www.thecut.com/2017/02/an-unprecedented-number-of-women-plan-to-run-for-office.html
Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Lee, F. (2017, July 13). Excommunicate me from the church of social justice. *Autostraddle*. Retrieved from https://www.autostraddle.com/kin-aesthetics-excommunicate-me-from-the-church-of-social-justice-386640/
Leighley, J. (1996). Group membership and the mobilization of political participation. *The Journal of Politics*, *58*(2), 447–463. doi:10.2307/2960234
Levine, P. (2009). The civic opportunity gap. *Educational Leadership*, *66*, 20–25.
Levine, P. (2013). The civic mission of higher education at a time of democratic discontent. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement*, *4*(2), 95–102.
Levine, P., & Kawashima-Ginsberg, K. (2017). *The republic is (still) at risk—And civics is part of the solution*. Medford, MA: Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University.
Levinson, M. (2010). The civic empowerment gap: Defining the problem and locating the solutions. In L. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta, & C. A. Flanagan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth* (pp. 316–346). New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.
Light, J. (2015). Putting our conversation in context: Youth, old media and political participation 1800–1971. In D. Allen & J. Light (Eds.), *From voice to influence: Understanding citizenship in the digital age* (pp. 19–33). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Linder, C., & Rodriguez, K. (2012). Learning from the experiences of self-identified women of color activists. *Journal of College Student Development*, *53*(3), 383–398.

Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Liptak, K. (2016, February 17). Obama to meet with Black Lives Matter activists and others at White House. *CNN Politics*. Retrieved from https://www.cnn.com/2016/02/17/politics/obama-black-lives-matter/index.html
Mason, L., & Wronski, J. (2018). One tribe to bind them all: How our social group attachments strengthen partisanship. *Political Psychology*, *39*(1), 257–277. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12485
McAdam, D. (1988). *Freedom summer*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
McAdam, D., & Paulsen, R. (1993). Specifying the relationship between ties and activism. *American Journal of Sociology*, *99*, 640–667.
McChesney, R. (1998). Introduction. In N. Chomsky (1999), *Profit over people* (pp. 7–16). New York, NY: Seven Stories Press.
McFarland, D., & Starmanns, C. (2009). Inside student government: The variable quality of high school student council. *Teachers College Record*, *111*(1), 27–54.
McFarland, D. A., & Thomas, R. (2006). Bowling young: How youth voluntary associations influence adult political participation. *American Sociological Review 71*(3), 401–425.
McLaughlin, M. (2000). *Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development*. Washington, DC: Public Education Network.
Miller, M., & Tolliver, D. (2017). *Student activism as a vehicle for change on college campuses: Emerging research and opportunities*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
Millstein, S. (2018, November 9). The average age in Congress in 2019 will drop dramatically thanks to newly elected millennials. *Bustle*. Retrieved from https://www.bustle.com/p/the-average-age-of-congress-in-2019-will-drop-dramatically-thanks-to-newly-elected-millennials-13124359
Mitra, D. (2008). Strengthening student voice initiatives in high schools. *Youth & Society 40*(3), 311–335.
The Muxerista Collective. (n.d.) *Que es eso? Muxerista introduction* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3ZTrSUpVCs
National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). *Demographic and enrollment characteristics of nontraditional undergraduates: 2011–12*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015025.pdf
National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Total fall enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions, by level of enrollment, sex, attendance status, and race/ethnicity of student: Selected years, 1976 through 2015*. [Table]. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_306.10.asp?current=yes
National Center for Education Statistics. (2017, July). *Immediate college enrollment rate*. [Figures]. US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1975 through 2016. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_302.30.asp
National Rifle Association. (2010, December 10). NRA University: Bring us to campus this spring! Retrieved from https://www.nraila.org/articles/20101210/nra-university-bring-us-to-your-camp

NBC News. (2019, March 6). Inside the sunrise movement: How young climate activists put the Green New Deal on the map [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.nbcnews.com/video/inside-the-sunrise-movement-how-young-climate-activists-put-the-green-new-deal-on-the-map-1452991043909

Oakes, J., & Rogers, J. (2006). *Learning power: Organizing for education and justice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ollis, T. (2011). Learning in social action. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning 51*(2), 248–268.

Orr, C. (2011). Women's studies as civic engagement: Research and recommendations. The Teagle Working Group on Women's Studies and Civic Engagement and the National Women's Studies Association. Retrieved from https://www.nwsa.org/Files/Resources/WomensStudiesasCivicEngagement2011Revised_Finalpdf-1.pdf

Quintana, C., & Thomason, A. (2017, May 15). The states where campus free speech bills are being born. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/The-States-Where-Campus/240073

Randall, D. (2017). *Making citizens: How American universities teach civics*. New York, NY: National Association of Scholars.

Revilla, A. (2004). Muxerista pedagogy: Raza womyn teaching social justice through student activism. *The High School Journal*, *87*(4), 80–94. doi:10.1353/hsj.2004.0013

Rhoads, R. (2000). *Freedom's web: Student activism in the age of cultural diversity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Rhoads, R. (2016). Introduction: Student activism, diversity, and the struggle for social justice. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *9*(3), 189–202. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000039

Rhoads, R., Saenz, V., & Carducci, C. (2005). Higher education reform as a social movement: The case of affirmative action. *The Review of Higher Education*, *28*(2), 191–220.

Roberts, F. L. (2018, July 13). How Black Lives Matter changed the way Americans fight for freedom. Retrieved from https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/race-and-criminal-justice/how-black-lives-matter-changed-way-americans-fight

Rosas, M. (2010). *College student activism: An exploration of learning outcomes* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA. https://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/589.

Rosen, S. (2019). So much of my very soul: How youth organizers' identity projects pave agentive pathways for civic engagement. *American Educational Research Journal*, *56*(1), 237–243. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831218812028

Rubin, B. (2007). "There's still not justice": Youth civic identity development amid distinct school and community contexts. *Teachers College Record*, *109*(2), 449–481.

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68–78. doi:10.1037110003-066X.55.1.68

Sánchez Carmen, S. A., Domínguez, M., Greene, A. C., Mendoza, E., Fine, M.,

Neville, H. A., & Gutiérrez, K. D. (2015). Revisiting the collective in critical consciousness: Diverse sociopolitical wisdoms and ontological healing in sociopolitical development. *The Urban Review*, *47*(5), 824–846. doi:10.1007/s11256-015-0338-5

Saslow, E. (2018, May 18). Gun violence's distinct echo. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/national/wp/2018/05/18/feature/a-teenager-wanted-to-talk-about-gun-control-would-anyone-in-her-town-listen/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.18fc6672d6ec

Schlesinger, R. (2018, March 5). Ka-ching. *U.S. News and World Report*. Retrieved from https://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2018-03-05/how-is-donald-trump-profiting-from-the-presidency-let-us-count-the-ways

Schmalz, J. (2017, January 21). Women's march on Washington. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from https://www.chronicle.com/article/Scenes-From-the-Womens-March/238931

Shapiro, S., & Brown, C. (2018, February 21). *The state of civics education*. Center for American Progress. (Issue Brief). Retrieved from https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/02/21/446857/state-civics-education/

Shoichet, C., Cullinane, S., & Kopan, T. (2017, October 26). US immigration: Dreamers and DACA explained. *CNN Politics*. Retrieved from https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/04/politics/daca-dreamers-immigration-program/index.html

Snow, D., Soule, S., Kriesi, H., McCammon, H. (Eds.). (2019). *The Wiley Blackwell companion to social movements* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons.

Snyder, S., Graham, K., Sullivan, J., & Purcell, D. (2011, March 26). Climate of violence stifles city schools-Efforts by Phila. administrators to stem the complex problem have fallen short. *The Inquirer* (Philadelphia), p. A1.

Snyder, S., Graham, K., Sullivan, J., & Purcell, D. (2011, March 30). Violence targets teachers, staff: In the last school year, 690 teachers were assaulted; In the last five years, 4,000 were. *The Inquirer* (Philadelphia). Retrieved from https://www.philly.com/philly/education/20110329_Teachers__staff_often_targets_of_school_violence.html

Soulvis, G. (2016, June 20). Cornell West: Black Lives Matter is an indictment of neoliberal power. *Truthout*. Retrieved from https://truthout.org/articles/cornel-west-black-americans-neoliberal-sleepwalking-is-coming-to-an-end/

Spring, K., Dietz, N., & Grimm, R., Jr. (2007). *Leveling the path to participation: Volunteering and civic engagement among youth from disadvantaged circumstances*. Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service.

Taylor, K.-Y. (2016). *From #BlackLivesMatter to black liberation*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket.

Trombetta, S. (2018, January 2). Understanding the radical history of self-care is essential to practicing it successfully. Retrieved from https://hellogiggles.com/lifestyle/health-fitness/understanding-radical-history-of-self-care/

Ujifusa, A. (2018, October 1). See the new federal education budget signed into law by Donald Trump. *Education Week*. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2018/10/donald-trump-education-spending-increase-second-straight-year.html

Valk, G. (2011, October 28). Op Liberty Plaza geeuwt de politie. *NRC*. Retrieved from https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2011/10/28/op-liberty-plaza-geeuwt-de-politie-12042294-a1195589

van Stekelenberg, J. (2012). The occupy movement: A product of this time. *Development*, *55*(2), 224–231. doi:10.1057/dev.2012.6

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic volunteerism in American politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Warnock, D., & Hurst, A. (2016). "The poor kids' table": Organizing around an invisible and stigmatized identity in flux. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *9*(3), 261–276. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000029

Warren, M. (2010). *Fire in the heart: How white activists embrace racial justice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Watts, R., & Flanagan, C. (2007). Pushing the envelope on youth civic engagement: A developmental and liberation psychology perspective. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35(6)*, 779–792.

Watts, R., Griffith, D., & Abdul-Adil, J. (1999). Sociopolitical development as an antidote for oppression. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *27*(2), 255–271.

Watts, R., & Guessous, O. (2006). Sociopolitical development: The missing link in research and policy on adolescents. In S. Ginwright, P. Noguera, & J. Cammarota (Eds.), *Beyond resistance: Youth activism and community change* (pp. 59–80). New York, NY: Routledge.

White, K. (2016). Black lives on campus matter: The rise of the new black student movement. *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture*, *63*, 86–97.

Workneh, L. (2015, December 22). 11 Big accomplishments black activists achieved in 2015. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/11-big-accomplishments-black-activists-achieved-in-2015_n_567996bae4b0b958f6583320

Wray-Lake, L., Shubert, J., Lin, L., & Starr, L. R. (2017). Examining associations between civic engagement and depressive symptoms from adolescence to young adulthood in a national U.S. sample. *Applied Developmental Science*. doi:10.1080/10888691.2017.1326825

Yale University Intercultural Affairs Committee. (2015, October). E-mail to students, posted on FIRE, October 27. Retrieved from https://www.thefire.org/email-from-intercultural-affairs/

Yates, M., & Youniss, J. (1999). *Roots of civic identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Zager, D., Solis, A., & Adjroud, S. (2017, September 15). These Georgetown students fought Nike and won. *The Nation*. Retrieved from https://www.thenation.com/article/these-georgetown-students-fought-nike-and-won/

Zarolli, J. (2017, February 9). Kellyanne Conway tells Americans to buy Ivanka Trump's products. *All Things Considered*. Retrieved from https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/02/09/514317345/kellyanne-conway-tells-americans-to-buy-ivanka-trumps-products

This page intentionally left blank

INDEX

Page numbers in *italics* indicate figures and tables.

AAUP (American Association of University Professors), 23–24
Abdul-Adil, J., 77, 78
academic advisors, 191–92
accomplishments: building up organizational power, 152–55; changing hearts and minds, 149–50; organizing events, 151, 166; overview of, 148–49; perceptions of effectiveness of, 160; promoting cultural shifts, 155–57; securing policy changes, 157–59
action: in sociopolitical development theory, 37; taking, in definition of activism, 35–36. *See also* behavioral dimension of activism; collective action; praxis of action and reflection
action civics, 136
activism: fear and, 80–81, 86, 94, 103; feelings about label of, 39–41, *42*, 43; goals of, 36–37, 148–49; in higher education, research on, 2–3, 5, 43, 97, 181; research on, 58, 90–91, 181; risks of, 94, 117; student definitions of, 35–39; visibility of, 151. *See also* behavioral dimension of activism; emotional and relational dimensions of activism; history of activism; intellectual dimension of activism; modes of activism; neoactivism; turn toward activism
administrators: power and privilege of, 171–72; professional development for, 193; public funding and, 172–73; securing meetings with, 153, 171; as viewed with suspicion, 189
agency, sense of: decision making and, 193; definition of, 26; examples of, 63, 71, 89, 115, 137, 160; in extracurricular contexts, 124, 125; faculty and staff and, 130; in identity development, 77; peers and, 108; schools and, 110
alt-right student groups, 156, 173
American Association of University Professors (AAUP), 23–24
American Freshman National Norms survey, 19
animal rights and species equality cause, 56–57
antineoliberalism, 181, 184–86
antiracism protests, 32–33
apathy of peers, 170
autonomy and leadership of clubs, groups, and organizations, 122, 124–25, 129

balancing schoolwork and activism, 141–42
behavioral dimension of activism: campaigns and causes, 74, 160–64, 175–76; challenges and setbacks, 169–74; example of, 147–48; overview of, 174–78; strategies, tools, and tactics, 164–69, *165*, *166*. *See also* accomplishments
belonging, sense of: in clubs, groups, and organizations, 122–23; with faculty and staff, 129; with peers, 107–8
Bernstein, Mary, 46
Black Lives Matter movement: culture change on campuses and, 156; family support and, 85; influence of, 15, 33, 63; overview of, 16–18
Boston University, 176

Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, 200n3
Brodsky, Alexandra, 10–11, 94
Brown, Michael, 16, 144. *See also* Ferguson protests
Bullard, Robert, 10
burnout, dealing with, 103, 104, 106
Butler, Jonathan, 18, 156

Calderon, Alfonso, 1
campaigns and causes, 74, 161–64, 175–76
Campbell, David, 138
campus sexual assault cause, 10–11, 76, 99–100, 101, 115, 161, *162*
Canary Mission website, 200n3
causes: campaigns and, 74, 161–64, 175–76; interconnected, 34, 46, 127, 161; by percentage engaged in, *162*; strategies, tools, and tactics used for, 164–69, *165*, *166*. *See also specific causes*
challenges and setbacks, 169–74
change: college environment as changing student activists, 187; to culture of campuses, 155–57; effecting, in definition of activism, 36–37; to hearts and minds, 149–50; to policy, 157–59; as slow process, 143, 148, 171; student activists as changing institutions, 188–89; youth organizing as strategy for, vii–viii
childish, student activists portrayed as, 179–80
Children's Discovery Museum, San Jose, California, vii
civic engagement, 20, 110, 145, 159, 194, 197n2, 202–3n3
civic identity, 77, 199n10
civic mission of universities, 22–23, 25, 30–31, 190–91, 195–96
civic opportunity gap, 197n2, 203n4
civics education, 109–10, 111, 112–15, 138
classrooms, student voice practices in, 118, 119–20, 193–94
climate change cause, 4, 60
climate justice cause, 7, 10, 41, 48, 161, *162*
Climate Strikes, 110
Clothesline Project, 63, 64
clubs, groups, and campus-based organizations: building power of, 152–55; faculty advisors for, 130, 191–92; in high school, 111, 115–18, 194; institutional support for, 192; as opportunity structures, 121–26
coalition-building and social identity, 4–8
Coalition for Responsible Endowments, 61
coalitions, campus-based intersectional, 126–27, 168, 191
Cole, Rose, 184
collective action: on campuses, 18; importance of, 149–50, 182, 185
collective care, 6–7, 93–95, 105, 106–7, 186
collectivist activity: activism as, 37–38; in turn to activism, 81
college students: as biographically available for activism, 2; collective nature of life of, 2–3; as consumers, 21, 25, 190; context for, and level of activism, 3–8; identity as, 41; involvement of, in decision making, 153–54, 193
commons, 9
communities of activists, tensions or dysfunctions within, 95–96
community-based activist-oriented clubs, 116
community engagement, opportunities for: in college, 134–36; in high school, 112
community organizing, 68–69
compromise, 167
Concerned Student 1950, University of Missouri, 9–10, 18
consumers, students as, 21, 25, 190
Contemporary Youth Activism (Conner and Rosen), ix
Conway, Kellyanne, 13
Corin, Jaclyn, 109–10, 202n2
Cornell University, 176
corporatization of higher education, 23
counseling services, 192–93
CountLove, 14

coursework: activism as affecting, 139–42, 174; as affecting activism, 132–34; connecting activism to, 130–31; discussion-based learning, 136–38; project-based learning, 134–36; texts read for, 138–39
Crenshaw, Kimberlé, 47, 139
critical consciousness: development of, 96–98, 113, 117, 133, 143, 181, 194; examples of, 29, 51–53, 70; presence of, in neoactivists, 8, 79, 180–81; sociopolitical development and, 37, 78–79, 139, 146, 182
critical support for activism, 88–89, 96, 192, 201n2
Crossley, Nick, 2
Cullors, Patrisse, 16
cultural shifts, promoting, 155–57
cycles of planning, practice, and performance, 123–24

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program, 13, 14, 163, 173
Dakota Access Pipeline, 12, 144, 163, 173
Daniel, Julia, 94
data collection, ix–x, 201n6
debates over controversial topics: in college, 137–38; in high school, 113–14
decision making, student involvement in, 153–54, 193
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, 13, 14, 163, 173
definitions of activism, 35–39
Deitsch, Matt, 1
demands: higher education as target of, 21; list of, 126–27, 191
demographics of activists: causes by, 45; non-neoactivists, 52–53; overview of, 33–34. *See also* race/ethnicity; socioeconomic status
developmental process for activist identity: clubs and organizations in, 121, 125; complexity of, 71–72; courses and texts in, 136; example of, 81; features of, 59; literature on, 199n10; peers and, 102; sociopolitical development theory and, 26, 77–79; support for, 132, 192. *See also* turn toward activism
DeVos, Betsy, 134, 163
dialectical relationship between activists and universities: as contentious and reciprocal, 186–91; example of, 28–31; higher education and, 191–93; neoliberal universities and, 20–26; secondary schools and, 193–94
Direct Action Everywhere, 128, 152
discussion-based learning, 136–38
diversity of student population, 5
double jeopardy, 197n3
Dream Defenders, 17
Dreamers. *See* DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program
duration of participation in clubs, groups, and organizations, 123–24

education, as public good, 22–23. *See also* higher education; high schools
educational work of activism, 150, 166
effectiveness of activism, perceptions of, 120, *121*, 160
emotional and relational dimensions of activism: as challenge, 174; changing hearts and minds and, 149–50; emotional experiences, 103–5; example of, 80–82; faculty, staff, and, 129–32; management of emotions, 105–7; overview of, 102–3, 107–8; parental and family influences, 82–90. *See also* friends and peers
emotional support from friends and peers, 93–96
empowerment, vii, 26, 104
engagement, sustaining, 170–71
epiphanies, 58
ethnicity. *See* race/ethnicity
events, organizing, 151, 166
extracurricular participation: during college, 121–26; during high school, 111, 115–18, 194

faculty: framing of, as enemies, 23–24; relationships with, 129–32; support from, 191–92. *See also* teachers, influence of

family members: influence of, 82–83; lack of support from, 84–87; types of support from, 87–90
fear and activism, 80–81, 86, 94, 103
Ferguson protests, 16, 17, 18, 61
Flanagan, Constance, 26, 28, 108
Florida, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act in, 202–3n3
fossil fuel divestment cause, 10, 61, 148–49, 198n7
Foster, Jeff, 109, 201n2
framing issues, 167–68
Freedom Summer Project, 3, 90
"free speech" bills, 24, 198n7
Free Speech Movement, 5, 90
freshman experience projects, 134–36
friends and peers: apathy of, 170; effects of activism on, 100–102; influence of, on turn toward activism, 90–91, 182. *See also* support from friends and peers
frustration, feelings of, 103, 104, 193
funding for higher education, 22–23, 192

Garza, Alicia, 16
Gattuso, Reina, 7
gay-straight alliances, 117
gender equality, 44, *45*
gender violence cause, 10–11
Georgetown University, 175–76, 177
Giroux, Henry, 3
goals of activism, 36–37, 148–49
Gonzaga University, 176, 177
González, Emma, 1, 109–10, 202n2
Gray, Freddie, 17
Griffith, D., 77, 78
group identity, development of, 122
gun reform cause, 1, 109, 110

Han, Hahrie, 58
Hands Up, Don't Shoot movement, 63
Harvey, David, 15
hate crimes, 156–57
Hayes, James, 17
healing justice work, 94
hearts and minds, changing, 149–50
Heinecke, Walter, 184
higher education: civic mission of, 22–23, 25, 30–31, 190–91, 195–96; funding for and corporatization of, 22–23; impact of, on sociopolitical development, 3; resurgence of student activism in, 18–21; as target of critique and demands, 21; transformative capacity of, 195–96; Trump administration and, 23–24. *See also* institutions of higher education; opportunity structures; student-university dialectic
high school, activism during: critical support from family and, 89; history of, 110–11; Juan on, 69–70; Paul on, 66; Priya on, 62–63; Sam on, 60–61; survey data on, 74–75
high schools: civics education in, 109–10, 111, 112–15; experiences and opportunities in, *119*; extracurricular clubs in, 111, 115–18; influential texts read in, 118–19; preparation for citizenship in, 111–12; senior year capstone projects in, 115; service-learning opportunities in, 112–13; student voice in, 118, 119–20, 193–94. *See also* high school, activism during
history of activism: current activism compared to, 4, 7–8, 184; effectiveness and knowledge of, 142–43; examples of interest in, 52, 114, 132; interest in, 9–11, 180, 181, 183; support for interest in, 192
Hogg, David, 202n2
Holeman, Heidi, 58
homes, exposure to activism in, 82–84
Hunt, Joshua, 22–23
Hurricane Sandy, 60

identity: activism and, 32–33, 43–44, *45*, 46–53, *48*, 77–79; clubs and groups based on, 125–26; as constructed internally and performed externally, 53, 55; number of causes taken up and, 164
identity development. *See* developmental process for activist identity; turn toward activism
identity politics, 43–44, 46, 199n3
inclusivity of student movements, 4–5

income inequality cause, 15–16
individuation, as key task of adolescence, 107–8
injustice, targeting, in definition of activism, 37
institutions of higher education: activist relationships to, 194–95; activists as challenging, 187–88; as challenging activists, 188; as changing activists, 187; private, 154–55; public, 172–73; reasons for activists to work with, 190; reasons to work with activists, 189–90; supporting and nurturing activism in, 191–93. *See also* coursework; neoliberal universities, neoactivism in; *specific colleges and universities*
intellectual dimension of activism: example of, 109–11; in high schools, 111–20; overview of, 142–46. *See also* opportunity structures
intellectual support from friends and peers, 96–99
intersectionality, 47–48, 139, 181
intersectional perspective of neoactivism: emotional support and, 94; example of, 76–77; history of, 197n3; overview of, 7–9, 180, 185–86; technological context of, 5–6; USAS and, 177
interview protocol, x
inward-facing activism, 41, 42, 43, 161–63
It's On Us, 128, 152

Just Cut It campaign, 175–76
Justice Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Education Act (Florida), 202–3n3

K–12 education system, 193–94
Kasky, Cameron, 202n2
Kawashima-Ginsberg, Kai, 119
Kennedy, John F., 3
key moments in turn toward activism, 58, 72. *See also* triggering events in turn toward activism
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 143
knowledge: acquisition of, 72, 96–98; through self-education, 143–45

labor activism, 68–69, 70–71, 175–77
leadership development initiatives on campuses, 25
leadership of clubs, groups, and organizations, 124–25
Lee, Francis, 95
legitimate peripheral participation, 98–99
Levine, Peter, 119
LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual) issues, 44, *45*, 85, 161, *162*
liberatory stage of sociopolitical development, 77
Lipman, Pauline, 8
Lorde, Audre, 6
losses, reframing as learning opportunities, 154

Madam Secretary (television series), 179–80
mainstream media, 189
management of emotions, 105–7. *See also* collective care; self-care
March for Our Lives, 1, 109, 110, 202n2
March for Science, 24
marginalization, in reflections on identity, 48–49, 50–51
Marjory Stoneman Douglas (MSD) High School, 109–10
markets, recognition of failure of, 11
Martin, Trayvon, 16, 17
mascot, campaign to change, 167
mass shootings, 67, 109
McAdam, Doug, 3–4, 90
McLaughlin, Milbrey, 123
mental health issues, 170
mentors/mentoring: from club leaders, 124; from faculty and staff, 52, 131–32; intellectual support and, 98; from internships, 29
modes of activism: in definitions by activists, 36; strategies, tools, and tactics, 34–35, 164–69, *165*, *166*; in turn to activism, 74–75
motivation: courses and texts in, 138; from emotions, 104–5, 201n3; examples of, 70–71, 73, 135; faculty and, 129; friends and, 92, 101;

motivation (*continued*)
in identity development, 47–48, 78; intellectual support and, 99; Trump effect and, 75–76
Muxerista, 55

Nadler, Jerrold, 13
national networks and organizations, 127–28, 168
National Rifle Association (NRA), 44, 68
National Rifle Association University (NRA U), 128
negative effects of activism on coursework, 141–42
neoactivism: characteristics of, 9–11, 180–83; neoliberalism and, 8–9; in neoliberal universities, 20–26, 28–31, 190, 195–96; social change and, 183–86; values of, 188. *See also* intersectional perspective of neoactivism
neoliberalism: accumulation by dispossession process of, 15; activism against, 181, 184–86; civic mission of higher education and, 25; definition of, 4, 8–9; individualistic development frameworks and, 183; intersectional perspective, self-care, and, 8; Obama administration and, 12; Trump administration and, 12–14
neoliberal universities, neoactivism in, 20–26, 28–31, 190, 195–96
networks, national, 127–28, 168
New Civics programs, 198n8
Nike, 175–76, 177
Noah, Trevor, 1
non-neoactivists, 52–53, *54*, 79
Northeastern University, 176
NRA (National Rifle Association), 44, 68
NRA U (National Rifle Association University), 128

Obama, Barack, 12, 17–18, 143, 173
Oberlin University, 147
Occupy Wall Street movement, 15–16
online campaigns, 74
opportunity structures: campus-based coalitions and national networks, 125–28, 168, 191; definition of, 26; overview of, 120–21, 181–83; perceived effectiveness of activism by, *121*; relationships with faculty and staff, 129–32; texts, 138–39. *See also* clubs, groups, and campus-based organizations; coursework
oppression: within activist communities, 95; challenges to, 181; support for friends who experience, 92; targeting, in definition of activism, 37
organizational power, building up, 152–55
orientations to activism, 41, 42, 43
outright activists, 39, 42, 43, 52
outward-facing activism, 41, 42, 43, 163–64

parental influences: exposure to activism in home, 82–84; views of activism of children, 84–90
peer diversity programs, 62–63
peers. *See* friends and peers
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Youth Division, 128
People's Climate March, 60
People's History of the United States, 61
Philadelphia Student Union, vii–viii
physical support from friends and peers, 99–100
Planned Parenthood Generation Action, 128, 135
police violence cause, 16–18, 63. *See also* Black Lives Matter movement
policy change, securing, 157–59
political action projects, 134–36
political identity, 199n10
positive effects of activism on coursework, 139–41
praxis of action and reflection: coursework and, 139–40; in sociopolitical development theory, 77, 79
private colleges and universities, 154–55
privilege: of administrators, 171–72;

critical awareness of, 92; in reflections on identity, 46–47, 48–51
professors. *See* faculty
project-based learning, 134–36
protests: antiracism, 32–33; on campuses, 2015–2018, 18–20; "free speech" bills and, 24; Occupy Wall Street movement, 15–16; in recent US history, 14–15. *See also* Black Lives Matter movement; Ferguson protests
public colleges and universities, 172–73
Pulse nightclub shooting, 67

race/ethnicity: of administrators, 159, 172; causes and, 164; enrollment and, 5; family support and, 85–86, 87, 88; identity and, 44, 47; motivations for activism and, 105; of nonneoactivists, 52–53; service learning and, 113; sociopolitical development theory and, 78; strategies used and, 165; of student activists, 34, *42*, *45*, *54*; types of activism and, 43. *See also* privilege
racial justice cause, 44, *45*, 161, *162*. *See also* Black Lives Matter movement
racism, 32–33, 173
radical healing, 94
relational work, activism as, 149–50. *See also* emotional and relational dimensions of activism
reluctant support for activism, 87–88
research methodology: data collection, ix–xi, 201n6; mixed-methods, 2; snowball sampling, xi, 123
resources, access to, 192
Rhoads, Robert, 82, 181
risks of activism, 94, 117
Road for Change summer tour, 1
Roberts, Frank Leon, 17
Roosevelt Campus Network, 128
Rutgers University, 176

safe spaces, 95
Sánchez Carmen, S. A., 95
Schlesinger, Robert, 13
school shootings, 109
Second Amendment cause, 65–67, 73, 128
secondary schools. *See* high schools
self-care: counseling services and, 192–93; history of, 197n3; management of emotions and, 105–7; nonactivist friends and, 101; practice of, 5–7
self-determination theory, 122, 125
self-education, 143–45
self-interest, in definition of activism, 38–39
self-selection bias, xi
service learning: in high schools, 111, 112–13; in neoliberal universities, 25
SES. *See* socioeconomic status
Showing Up for Racial Justice, 61
Sierra Club Student Coalition, 128
single-issue activism, 34, 46, 127, 161
skills, acquisition of, 72, 98
"snowflake generation," 95, 180
social capital, 131
social change process, activism as, 148, 183–86
social identity and coalition-building, 4–8
social justice warriors, 9, 163, 164, 180
social media: intellectual support and, 99; intersectional perspective, self-care practice, and, 5–6; recording professors and posting on, 23; use of, 53, 144, 147, 152, 168–69
socioeconomic status (SES): causes and, 164; civic opportunity gap and, 203n4; enrollment and, 5; graduation from college and, 197n2; identity and, 47; service learning and, 113; sociopolitical development theory and, 78; strategies used and, 165, *166*; of student activists, 34, *42*, *45*, *54*; voice opportunities and, 120
sociopolitical context of neoactivism, 12–20, 22, 23–25
sociopolitical development theory: activist identity and, 77–79, 180–83; overview of, 37; peer support and, 108; sense of belonging and, 123; as stage theory, 199n10

solidarity with faculty and staff, 129
speak-outs, 153
staff, relationships with, 129–32, 191–92
Stand Your Ground bills, 159
state-level policy change, 158–59
stereotypes of student activists, 179–80
storytelling, 167, 168
strategies, tools, and tactics, 164–69, *165*, *166*. *See also* modes of activism
strong support for activism, 87
Student Divestment Network, 128
Student Power Network, 128
Students for a Democratic Society, 117
student-university dialectic: as contentious and reciprocal, 186–91; example of, 28–31; higher education and, 191–93; neoliberal universities and, 20–26; secondary schools and, 193–94. *See also* college students
student voice in classrooms, 118, 119–20, 193–94
successes. *See* accomplishments
Sulkowicz, Emma, 100
Sunrise Movement, 10
support: from faculty and staff, 129–32, 191–92; from institutions of higher education, 191–93; from parents and family members, 84–90
support from friends and peers: in clubs, groups, and organizations, 122; emotional, 93–96; intellectual, 96–99; overview of, 91–93; physical, 99–100

Take Back the Night movement, 63, 64
teachers, influence of, 109, 113, 119–20, 132–33. *See also* faculty
testimonials, 167, 168
texts, influential: in college, 138–39; in high school, 118–19
Thunberg, Greta, 110
Title IX policies, 134, 163, 173
Tometi, Opal, 16
Towson University, 189
trauma, telling stories of, 94
triggering events in turn toward activism, 58, 60, 75–77
Trump, Donald J.: campaigns against policies of, 163; election of, 75–77, 173; hate crimes, racism, and, 156; higher education and, 23–24; neoliberalism and, 12–13; presidential campaign of, 19–20, 65; white identity politics and, 43–44
Trump, Ivanka, 13
trustees, securing meetings with, 153
turn toward activism: collectivist activity in, 81; conceptualization of, 58–60, 71–73; as developmental process for activist identity, 2, 20–21; examples of, 56–57, 60–71; friend and peer influences on, 90–91; parental influences on, 82–90; sociopolitical development theory and, 77–79; survey data on, 74–75; Trump Effect on, 75–77. *See also* opportunity structures

uncomfortable activists, 40–41, 42, 43, 62
unconventional activists, 39–40, 42, 62, 67–68
United States Student Association, 128
United Students against Sweatshops (USAS), 128, 175–77
United We Dream, 128
University of California, Berkeley, 176
University of Michigan, "Michigan in the World" website, 192
University of Missouri (Mizzou), 9–10, 18, 33, 114, 156
University of Washington, 176
USAS (United Students against Sweatshops), 128, 175–77

Valladares, Michelle Renee, 94
Villanova University, 2, 176
violence, domestic and sexual: as cause, 63, 64, 76, 101, 115, 161–62; feminist social movement tradition and, 10–11; Sulkowicz action and, 99–100
visibility of activism, 151
voter registration and education cause, 3

Warren, Mark, 58
Watts, Rod, 26, 28, 77, 78, 108, 182
West, Cornell, 16–17
White, Khadijah, 18

white identity politics, 43–44
whiteness, critical awareness of, 92
white supremacy, 44, 173
wins. *See* accomplishments
Women's March, 11, 24
work, activism as, 147–48
Workers' Rights Consortium (WRC), 175–76

Yale University, 32–33
youth organizing, as change strategy, vii–ix